

GEORGE LANSBURY

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*My Quest for Peace*

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DEDICATED TO MY FRIENDS OF  
BOW AND BROMLEY  
FOR MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS  
MY COMRADES AND FELLOW WORKERS

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## FOREWORD



**T**HIS book is being published during a most serious crisis in the history of the world. I have been sorely tempted to withdraw nearly all that appears concerning Austria. I have, however, decided to leave in the chapter which tells of my interview in Austria because it is a record of conditions as I saw them when I visited that country some months ago.

Although the world is arming at an ever-increasing rate and civilisation is apparently rushing to destruction, I refuse to despair. Even yet I have faith that the principles I have endeavoured to express in this book and before statesmen will find support and avert the catastrophe of universal war.

Pacifism is not on trial. The Spanish, Chinese and Abyssinian wars are not the outcome of the policy which pacifists advocate. The crime and outrage committed against the people of Austria are not the result of an effort to apply collective justice to the affairs of mankind.

Therefore I send this book out with an appeal to all workers for peace to renew their efforts. All we hoped and prayed for is not yet lost. Power politics is only apparently triumphant. We must all bow our heads with shame and anguish when we realise the horrors and persecution which is carried on in Austria, Germany and elsewhere ; but we must not imagine this condition of things will be remedied by another and fouler universal bloodbath. We cannot

destroy murder and slaughter that way. Hard and difficult though our path may be, we pacifists must preserve our faith that love alone will save the world—a love which in no way condones, excuses or palliates evil, but on the contrary recognises and condemns evil of every kind by whomsoever it is committed, and at the same time strives to show a better way. The crimes now being committed by man against man cry aloud, not for vengeance but for a complete change in our relationships one with another.

The campaign in which I have been engaged had this end in view. Governments have not responded, except our own and the French Government, who, nearly twelve months ago, asked M. Van Zeeland and his colleague, M. Frère, to study and report on the economic plight of the world. This report is now published. M. Van Zeeland calls for a conference such as my friends and I have advocated. This conference should meet now. We must accept all Governments as we find them. The policy of appeasement through collective justice has never yet been tried. I am confident that Stalin, Mussolini, Hitler, Roosevelt, Blum, and Chamberlain meeting together would soon find a way out. We must not allow the men who made the vengeful peace treaties to take control, they should remain dumb and leave to younger, wiser men the task of handling the present situation. I know, no one better, that dictators are difficult and hard to trust, but they are here and they control masses of people, and we must either negotiate or fight.

I repeat, pacifists condemn all the crimes now being committed by any guilty Government against God and humanity, but our faith remains sure and immovable that hatred can only be overcome by love. If we are certain our faith rests on the sure foundation of reality, we must be content to understand that the failure of others to accept it in no way destroys its truth.

GEORGE LANSBURY

## *Chapter 1*

### PACIFISM AND LABOUR LEADERSHIP

NOBODY, however arrogant or powerful, in whatever land, openly or tacitly declares a love of war, no matter how he may extol the heroism of those who fight. Governments declare with a kind of deadly monotony their earnest desire for peace. At the same time all peoples are asked to supply an ever-increasing amount of money for armaments and war equipment of all kinds. "Trust in God and make your poison gas deadlier" has taken the place of "Keep your powder dry". Nobody says a word in defence of war: in fact, all Government speakers make feeble and far-fetched apologies for the armament votes they demand. Most of them declare that the gases they will use are for self-defence. This is the most ancient of all excuses. It does not alter the fact that ever since the Armistice of 1918 the whole world has steadily and without rest been making ready for another great war. The present armaments race is not really rearmament, for no one ever disarmed: it is an accentuation of the armaments policy pursued everywhere except in Germany and other defeated nations since 1920. Germany started arming in dead earnest when the Allies refused to listen to her proposal that all

nations should disarm, in which case she would be satisfied with an army of 300,000. This proposition was not even discussed. Neither were proposals for the international control of aviation and the complete abolition of aerial bombing. Great Britain shares a very large part of the responsibility for present-day aerial warfare, because of the refusal of her representatives in the first instance to accept without reservation the proposal to abolish all aerial warfare and bring aviation under international control. It has been stated that the Germans armed secretly and, without the knowledge of other Governments, created a huge air force and acquired other war equipment. Possibly, but it is equally certain that had any effort been made to treat the pre Hitler Governments with the slightest recognition of their standing as heads of a great people, and efforts been made to bring them into European affairs on terms of equality, Europe would not now be faced with the fear of universal war. The late Arthur Henderson and Monsieur Briand worked hard towards this end, but neither of these men was in power sufficient time to enable him to win through.

I cannot forget my own part in this business of aerial warfare. I was a member of the Labour Government which not only retained the right to bomb people living within the Empire, but also defended this kind of warfare as being more merciful. I have since been quite ashamed that I was part of that Government. Whenever anyone joins a Government he must be prepared to accept the principle embodied in the words "Cabinet Responsibility". No person who holds the pacifist faith should take office in any Government other than one which is elected on a programme



which will ensure the abandonment of imperialism, accompanied by disarmament. There is no possible compromise on this. I am, and always have been, a passive resister. If the masses in all lands would refuse to manufacture armaments there would be no war. Statesmen and prelates would soon find a better way of living in order to preserve the race from suicide. Gandhi has staked out a road which, if followed, would free mankind from the curse of war ; but his policy must be accepted without compromise. The practice of non-violent resistance calls for patience, for courage, far in excess of what is needed in war, but in its result it is much more effective than meeting slaughter by slaughter. All through my life I have seen the wrong and dreadful results of war. The way out has never been so clear as to-day. It is not easy going, but it is sure : let the masses everywhere declare without reservation " Away with the accursed thing ", and peace would follow.

Much of my time since a boy has been spent in speaking and organising against war. Sometimes for short periods, my mind has been a little doubtful of my position, and I have found myself tempted to follow the crowd. But always it has been my good fortune to pull myself up with a mental jerk and restore sanity to my thoughts and actions. I love to sail the seas and mix with people in other lands, and find myself treated as an equal and, best of all, as a friend ; but I do not desire protection because my countrymen continue to hold any nation in subjection, or desire to control the highways of the seas for their own special benefit. I believe the majority of my fellow-citizens feel the same way.

I have been travelling the world intermittently during

the past fifty two years, meeting the humble and exalted in all lands, trading as a merchant, earning my living as an ordinary day labourer, attending conferences, and finally going from capital to capital seeking peace. This book will tell you of some of these latter journeys. It is written for the one purpose of bringing home to my readers the fact that wars are man made and can by man be prevented. This quest for peace is not new. All through my lifetime it has been possible for people like myself to join with others in organised groups working for peace. The basis of appeal which has continually had my support is the Christian doctrine to be found in the life and teaching of Jesus. "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us", "Do unto others as you would they should do to you"—these and many similar injunctions seem to me to show what is needed from each of us to bring peace into the world. There are sayings of Christ which, men argue, conflict with these. This may be so—these I quote have the merit of realism, they are not mere idle words. Everybody knows that the practice of these principles of life and conduct by professing Christians in all lands would give peace in our time. We who are pacifists in this sense are neither dreamers nor self righteous prigs. We contend that those are dreamers who declare that war is futile and criminal and at the same time declare their inability to do anything effective to prevent it happening, but on the contrary, use all scientific knowledge and inventions preparing for the very catastrophe they declare they wish to avoid. Jesus lived both in thought and deed in a world of reality. He was known in Palestine as one who went about doing

good. Mere dreamers do not gather such a reputation. When He had to face the ignominy of a felon's death, He stood quietly and without fear for the principles of passive resistance, and at the last lived up to the prayer He taught his followers and prayed forgiveness for those who tortured and slew Him.

I hope to show in this book that those of us who try humbly and, as it were, from a long way off, to learn of Him, do not ask our fellow men and women to accept a gospel of illusion. We see, as clearly as others do, all the evil of which men are capable. We understand this because we know ourselves. We also know the good there is in all of us. No self-conscious righteousness is found in any who truly strive to follow the Master. We see ourselves in the best and worst of people around us, and God, or if you will, Goodness, is in us all. Consequently, we are confident that it is more easy to remove the causes of war than it is to try and prevent war by preparing for universal slaughter; and we not only declare our faith in the teachings of Jesus, but we also strive to show how human relationships at home and abroad may be so changed as to make peace the dominant factor in the lives of all people. Our expression of religion may be summed up in the words: "Remove the causes of evil".

My first essay at public meeting and discussion on behalf of peace took place in my early teens and has continued ever since. Together with my young friends I opposed the Afghan wars, the Zulu, Kaffir, and other African wars, as well as the British war against Abyssinia. All this is years old history, but it is history as also is the story of the British war on China for the purpose of forcing

the Chinese Government to allow the import and sale of opium in that country. I am sure our people would never sanction such a policy again, but when we are judging others who are at present striving to blast their way to imperialist power, it is well to remember our own past and that we too conquered because our weapons were more deadly than those owned by people described as uncivilised.

In 1931, when I became leader of the Labour Party, I was up against the difficulty of squaring my pacifist principles with the policy of the Party. Speaking for a party means speaking on behalf of the policy of that party, and as in and out of Parliament the question of peace and war became more and more dominant in our discussions, I found myself in conflict with my colleagues. They never professed to be members of a pacifist party, though usually they voted against money for armaments. During the years since the war, the Party's policy has been based on the Covenant of the League of Nations, which implies that peace can be maintained by and through what is known as collective security, though I think there was and still is some diversity of opinion as to what this collective security really means. I have no intention of arguing whether a policy of sanctions could have secured peace or whether massed force against massed force might have given the world peace. Events have demonstrated that it is not possible to operate sanctions collectively without universal agreement, which was not, and is not likely to be, forthcoming, and also that if sanctions are operated to such an extent as would seriously impede an aggressor, we should speedily find ourselves back to 1914 with one set of nations armed to the teeth facing another combination

equally armed, which would undoubtedly mean universal war and destruction. Nobody in authority denies this.

There came a time, in 1935, when a decision was taken by the whole Labour Movement in regard to the war between Italy and Abyssinia. The Party was prepared to go any length, even to wage war, on behalf of the attacked Abyssinians. It was not possible for me to support such a policy. In my judgment the greatest crime connected with the conquest of Abyssinia is that the Governments forming the League of Nations allowed the Emperor to believe that the League would save his country, when all the time those at Geneva knew that effective sanctions could not be imposed without war, which the Governments representing the Great Powers were not prepared to risk. Had the League Assembly been quite honest, it would have told the Emperor the truth and done its utmost to secure him some better position than is now his. The whole story of this dreadful episode in European history has yet to be written. When it is told few, if any, will escape censure.

Before this decision was taken—at the Trade Union Congress held at Margate in September and at the Labour Party Conference at Brighton in October—I wrote a letter to *The Times* newspaper which appeared on Monday, August 19th as follows:

“The whole civilized world is preparing for war, the armaments industry is going full steam ahead. My friend George Barnes has asked, Is there no voice in the world which can call a halt? I am not thinking only of the Italo-Abyssinian dispute. It is the general world situation, of which the Abyssinian questions are

only incidental, which perplexes and worries people like myself. The terrible acceptance of future war as something we must prepare for as unavoidable is creating fear and despair among masses of people in all lands.

"Many voices are heard blaming this nation or some other. I think we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. Surely it must be obvious that once more in the world's history civilisation is at the parting of the ways. If we go forward along the road which inevitably leads to war then we are all quite sure religion, morals, civilisation will all crash into ruin and the world once more relapse into barbarism.

"I am certain if our Government possessed the wisdom and the will to take the initiative and call upon the League of Nations to summon a new world conference, for the one single purpose of discussing how the vast stores of national resources and the tremendous unsatisfied markets of the world can be organised and regulated for the service of mankind, a great response would come from the common people everywhere. It is said the moment is not opportune. I disagree. Now is the day and now is the hour when action must be taken if we are to save ourselves from the fate which threatens us.

"Surely in this crisis the voice of Christendom and all religions should be heard. I appeal to our Archbishops to take the lead in this matter. I propose they appeal to His Holiness the Pope to join in and call a solemn convocation or congress representative of every phase of Christian and other religious thought, call the gathering to meet in the Holy Land of Jerusalem, and from Mount Calvary 'call a Truce of God' and bid the war spirit rest.

"I know men say wars are not entirely due to economic causes, but who is there who reads the speeches

and writings of Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese statesmen will deny that for them war is considered necessary, because they must get out into the world, must get access to more territory and more raw material? Who will deny that in each case these statesmen consider themselves as 'have nots' as opposed to ourselves and others who are the 'haves'? As I see these things, there is only the Christian way out, and once again in ringing tones mankind needs to hear the word of God calling all nations to turn away from strife and pursue the path of co-operation. No one will say there is not enough room, enough raw materials, enough markets for us all. I am certain that with the true Christian spirit applied the white and coloured races can co-operate to create a better civilisation than has yet been dreamed of. If the churches, led by their leaders, will take the field and tell statesmen the solemn truth that Christ's teaching and the teachings of all great philosophers is not moonshine, not sentiment, but cold, solid truth, and has within it the promise of this life, a great revolution in men's thoughts and action will take place. In this day of ours, through the providence and mercy of God, science and invention enable us to say there is power to give the highest and noblest life for all the children of men, no matter whether they are born black, brown, yellow, or white.

"I wish, Sir, to challenge our leaders to take the action I suggest, so that at least the voice of those who claim to speak for the God of love and peace shall be heard clarion clear throughout the world calling to all nations to halt and accept the truce of God suggested above.

"I may again be told this is all mere sentiment and people like me are fools, it may be so. Even if we are it is, I respectfully say, the foolishness of the Gospel

which has taught me that the law of God is love and the application of that law is sharing. My beloved country has power with America, France, and Russia over most of the earth's surface. All four nations owe allegiance to the principle of co operation and service. Surely the churches, led by His Holiness the Pope in co operation with our own leaders, will not fail the world.

"I cannot believe the men who hold these great positions can dare to risk remaining silent while mankind is rushing to ruin. They must act, and must act now. I bid them remember faith and prayer is not enough. Let us pray to God for courage, strength, and will to put our whole faith and confidence in His word who has taught us that the way of life is love."

This letter caused widespread interest and was cabled all over the world. I received hundreds of letters of approval and thanks, and only one or two questioning the wisdom of my challenge to the churches. I sent a copy of this letter with a covering note to His Holiness the Pope, to His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, to Free Church ministers, to the Chief Rabbi, and to many other persons. The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Chief Rabbi, and others responded very sympathetically and some action was taken to call for prayer and supplication for peace. The Archbishop of Westminster, replying for the Pope, was also very kindly and sympathetic, telling me of the prayers and exhortations made by His Holiness on behalf of peace. But no one able to speak for the churches, great or small, backed the proposal for a conference in the Holy Land and a call from Jerusalem to Governments to throw down their arms and come together in a new



World Conference<sup>1</sup> for the purpose of discussing how to remove the causes which Governments considered obliged them to arm. Many people of all creeds and parties certainly applauded my action. Ministers of the Crown said that a conference could only be successful if a good deal of preparation and discussion took place beforehand. None of these realists, of the clergy or laymen, who think my friends and I are good natured dreamers, showed themselves other than mere word spinners. All these "practical" persons did was to allow Europe and Asia to drift into its present condition—a condition which they all agree is very difficult and extremely dangerous. Had they taken action to deal with the causes as enthusiastically and vigorously as they have taken action to pile up armaments in order to keep things as they are, and by doing so on their own showing make the world safe for barbarism, we should by now have seen great progress made towards a real peace. Realism where war is concerned, as practised by Governments and supported by leaders of organised religion, is the very negation of everything the world stands for. War is indeed the greatest illusion of all time.

I ought to say here that the French and British Governments have recently taken some action. A few months ago they commissioned Monsieur Van Zeeland, then Prime Minister of Belgium, to visit Washington and European capitals in order to discuss and enquire into the steps which could be taken to deal with the economic, financial and other causes of conflict. My readers will probably have read the press summaries of his report.

As a result of the public discussions of this letter, I

found myself overwhelmed with applications to write and to speak on behalf of my proposals. My friends of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, members of the Free Churches, and the Society of Friends, led by Canon Raven, the Rev Henry Carter, and Percy Bartlett, came to my house to discuss a plan of campaign. They were joined at later meetings by others, including my comrade and good friend the late Canon Sheppard. From then onwards we have been engaged in an almost continual propaganda campaign for peace at home and abroad. There has been no dubiety about our proposals. Publicly, in and out of Parliament, I have declared for pure and simple pacifism, making it quite clear that in my opinion it would be quite easy to avoid war if nations were as willing to sacrifice imperialism, domination, and greed as they are to sacrifice human life in a vain endeavour to make the world safe for national aggrandisement. It is not possible to establish peace in a world of competing imperialism, and the British nation is specially concerned with this aspect of peace propaganda.

I want, however, to say as emphatically as I can, that were I completely ignorant as to the means whereby peace could be secured through co-operative sharing of territories, natural resources and markets, I would still advocate pacifism and the application of the principles of sharing and co-operation. Those of us who advocate the removal of the causes of such diseases as smallpox, diphtheria, typhoid, etc., may not be able to explain clearly the methods or the application of the methods by which these diseases may be prevented, but we know they can be prevented, and that prevention is better than cure.

If you have followed the dates, you will have seen that September and October, 1935, were two critical months for me. As Leader of the Labour Party I had to meet both the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party Conference. Already my letter to *The Times* and public speeches following it had made my position clear; but very great pressure was put upon me to remain in my position as Leader, and for a period of forty-eight hours at Margate I hesitated as to what I should do. It is not necessary for me to apologise or excuse myself. I held an honourable position which had come to me owing to circumstances which were none of my making. The men who had elected me as their leader urged me to remain. In the end, however, my decision had to be made, and though some of my comrades said rather hard and bitter things about my wobbling conscience and what they rather prematurely described as my swan song, I quite readily handed in my resignation, and, in spite of an almost unanimous request to remain as leader, refused to withdraw it.

Although I cheerfully withdrew from a position which had become intolerable to my peace of mind, I was grieved beyond measure to take such action at the particular moment when it was incumbent for me to do so. A general election was imminent, and whatever my influence may have been, whether great or small, such as it was the Party was bound to be the loser. And my opinion of the Labour Party has been that it alone of all political movements in our country is qualified to lead Britain out of the pit of a decaying imperialism into the fuller, better life of co-operation.

The following is a summary of my speech at the Conference at which my position was discussed

"I am in a very difficult position to day. Often—and only the Executive and my colleagues know how often—I have disagreed with their policy, and because I was a member of the Executive, and lately because of my other position, I have remained silent during the whole of the Conference. I think last year I did not speak at all except to answer a question. I say that because I want everyone to understand that it is difficult for me to stand here to day and publicly repudiate a big fundamental piece of policy. If I were in any doubt about that policy, I am sure I should not take the line I am taking, but I ask the Conference to believe me when I say that I have never been more convinced that I am right, and that the Movement is making a terrible mistake, than I am to day. My only difficulty, and it is a real one, is my relationships with the Party. I agree with those of my friends—I know they will allow me still to say that, because we are all real friends in this matter—I agree with the position of those of my friends who think that it is quite intolerable that you should have a man speaking as Leader who disagrees fundamentally on an issue of this kind, and so, next Tuesday, in London, the Parliamentary Party (being the part of the Movement that elects the Leader) is meeting, and together we will discuss this matter, and I hope we shall arrive at a satisfactory conclusion. This Conference constitutionally is unable to deal with the matter, except by some kind of emergency motion of recommendation to the Parliamentary Party, or by expressing its opinion on the situation. And I want to say that I should not consider an expression of opinion hostile to my continuance as Leader as anything more than natural and perfectly friendly. I hope that that

statement will make it absolutely clear where I stand, because I am torn just like that.

" . The question has also been raised of my consistency. Well, I have said in the House of Commons that I know I am consistently inconsistent. You cannot live to-day without being inconsistent. We shall all be consistent when we are in our graves, but not before, and even if I were consistent I have learned this. I have learned not to go through life looking over my shoulder at the ghost of what I have done.

" But there is one thing that brings me to this microphone to day, and that is an overwhelming conviction, since I was a boy, that force is no remedy. During the last six years—first in the Labour Government, and secondly, as Leader of the Party—I have been in a kind of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde position. I have had to speak for the Party, I have had to see Sir Samuel Hoare for the Party, and on each occasion when I have spoken for the Party and when I saw Sir Samuel Hoare, I tried honestly and straightforwardly to state the Party's position. If there be any inconsistency in that, well and good, I shall leave it at that. My own position—as I believe that of most people, I will not say everybody—my own position has always been—and perhaps, this being so, it was inconsistent for me to join the Labour Government and equally inconsistent to become its Leader—but my position personally has never shifted. I believe that force never has and never will bring permanent peace and permanent goodwill to the world. I believe also that we in our Movement have really said that in dealing with our own striving for Socialism. We have said to the workers 'We are sorry for your plight, but you must wait until you have converted the rest of the people to your point of view.' I have gone into mining areas, I have gone into my

own district when people have been starving or semi starving, I have stood in the midst of dockers who have been on the verge of starvation (before there was any 'dole' or Poor Law Assistance, excepting the workhouse), and I have said to them 'No, you must not rise, you must have no violence, you must trust to the winning of this through public opinion' I have never at any time said to the workers of this country 'You must take up either arms, or sticks, or stones, in order to force your way to the end that you seek to attain' And when I am challenged on these issues, I say to myself this I have no right to preach pacifism to starving people in this country and preach something else in relation to people elsewhere And that has been a fundamental state, it has not been something of expediency It has been a belief that we should sooner or later in the world win our way with waiting I have said the same thing on the Continent when I have had the privilege of speaking abroad I have said it in Russia when my Russian comrades allowed me to see a review of their air force, and when they took me in one of their warships I have never under any circumstances said that I believed you could obtain Socialism by force

And why have I said that? I have said it, first because One whose life I revere and who, I believe, is the greatest figure in history, has put it on record 'Those who take the sword shall perish by the sword' All history right down the ages proves that You may go through the continent of America, and they have a problem on their hands just now which is insoluble in regard to the Negroes, you may go to India, and you will see millions there living under terrible conditions You may go into your own country and on the continent of Europe, and it is still a seething mass of discontent, a seething mass of unrest

' Perhaps you will say to me—it has been said—  
 ' But things are different now, the world has changed ' I would die a very happy man indeed if I thought Europe and Britain and the world had been improved by the Great War. Someone said this afternoon something about armaments. Do you know that what terrified me in all this business was that we were told that the Germans were little by little rearming? We were told, somewhere about eighteen months ago, I think, that the Government had known that they were rearming. Then a panic seized the House of Commons, and increased armaments were demanded. To-day there are more armaments in Europe, and very soon there will be much more armaments in this country than there were before the war. I would like to ask whoever replies to me. Is the increase of armaments a sign of collective security? Do we believe that each country has to pile up more and more armaments in order that we may all be secure? What a world! And it is not only Hitler, not only Mussolini, but at the other end of the world there is Japan, all of them feverishly rearming. And we met that, as we met it before 1914, by saying we must rebuild the British Navy, if necessary obtain a £200,000,000 loan, we must have the greatest air force it is possible to create, we must mechanise our land forces, and we must in every possible way prepare our island for peace. For peace, mind you! We are going to move some of our schools from the south coast somewhere inland. No decision has been come to yet, but we are thinking of moving Woolwich Arsenal down to Wales. We are training our children for air drill and gas attack drill. There are pictures in the papers telling us all that. One newspaper comes out demanding that we should have conscription now. You have to ask yourselves what is all this for? Certainly not for Italy and Abyssinia

No one believes that It was all started before this crisis became as acute as it is to-day.

"We were told that the only means of defence against air attacks—this was not a statement made by a pacifist, but by a leading member of the present Government—is that we should massacre more women and children than those who might attack us. War becomes more bestial, more sickening every day. Christ said that we had to love one another. I try to, and I dare say most of you do. I cannot believe that the Christ whom you worship, or the saints whose memory you all adore, that for any reason or any cause, they would be found pouring bombs and poison gas on women and children or men for any reason whatsoever. Not even in retaliation, because also it is written 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay.'

"In 1919 the victorious nations told their people that they would give them vengeance on the Germans, that militarism was smashed, and it would never be rehabilitated. To-day we know that that is not true. And now we are asked to put our faith in the same means through the League of Nations. I, personally, cannot see the difference between mass murder organised by the League of Nations, or mass murder organised between individual nations, to me it is exactly the same. I have spoken for Socialism on many an occasion, and the stock argument against me by Christians and Jews and people of all religious faiths, and of no religious faiths, has been 'Oh, Socialism, it is a fine ideal, my boy, but you have got to change human nature first.' Well, I have never succumbed to that about Socialism, and I am not going to succumb to it about war.

I asked in Parliament—and Attlee has done it ably and consistently, and so have others of our members—that our Government should turn their minds away from discussing the size of guns or the strength



of poison gas, and devote their energies to finding out how to remove the causes of war. That is our stock argument about the wrongs of our country. Remove the causes that create the depressed areas, remove the causes that create unemployment. We have tried to get that dealt with by the Government of the day. Sir Samuel Hoare put his finger on what he thought was the spot of weakness in our case when he spoke at Geneva. He said that he was not sure that it was so much a difficulty of getting raw materials as it was of finding markets after you had worked up your raw materials. I am not quoting his exact words, but that is in effect what he meant and said.

"I think that we in this Party have got to get down to that question, and to get down to it instead of backing this policy of sanctions. I was asked the other day what would I do if I went to Geneva? Well, first of all you have to get a mandate for what you want done, and it is a little unfair to say to a man like myself 'How would you deal with this enormous problem now?' But I will tell you, broadly, what I would do if I had the power to go to Geneva backed by our people, or if I went to a Conference of Labour backed by our people. I would go to them and say very much what Dr Salter said a little while ago, and that is that Great Britain—the great imperialist race—led by the common people of our race were finished with imperialism, that we were willing that all the peoples under our flag, wherever you can establish government, should be free to establish their own governments, that there should be no such thing as domination either in our lives or in our actions, but that we would be willing that the whole of the resources which are under our control should be pooled for the service of all mankind. Not handed out here and there to individual nations to exploit, but put under the positive

control of an International Commission And I would say further, that I wanted our nation to say at the same time—because we wanted nothing from the other people but what we could give something fairly and squarely in exchange for—that we would be willing to become disarmed unilaterally

"I believe that the first nation that will put into practice practical Christianity, doing to others as you would be done unto, that nation would lead the world away from war and absolutely to peace And when I am asked 'Would the nation ever agree to pay the price?' I maintain what John Bright maintained—that if you put against the gains from imperialism the cost of those gains in human life and in values of all descriptions, you are losers all the time, that there is no real gain for the toiling masses of the world, and that this Christianity with its psalm singing and prayers—this Christianity is the realist principle of life, because it says We are willing that you shall carry out the doctrine of those who are strongest, helping with the strength of their brain and their power the weak I know that you will say to me 'Say that to Mussolini, or say that to Hitler' If I had had power during this period I would have gone and faced these men at Geneva and I would have let the world know what it was I was proposing to do

"This is no mere ideal, it is no greater international ideal than the national ideal of common service for each other within our own nation We have got somewhere and at some time to begin, and I want our people to begin And that is the message that somehow I must put to the world wherever people will hear me

"It may be that I shall not meet you on this platform any more (Cries of 'No') There are things that come into life that make changes inevitable It may

very well be that in the carrying out of your policy I shall be in your way. When I was sick and on my back ideas came into my head, and one was that the only thing worth while for old men to do is at least to say the thing they believe, and at least to try to warn the young of the dangers of force and compulsion. Attlee says we have the compulsion of the police and the law. Some day even that will pass away, when justice between man and man comes into being.

"It is said that people like me are irresponsible. I am no more irresponsible a leader than the greatest Trade Union leader in the country. I live my life, as they do, amongst ordinary people. I see them and know all there is to know about them, and they do about me. But one thing I know is that during the last war the youth, the early manhood of my division was slaughtered most terribly, and now I see the whole world rushing to perdition. I see us, as someone has said, rattling into barbarism again. If mine were the only voice in this Conference, I would say in the name of the faith I hold, the belief I have that God intended us to live peaceably and quietly with one another. If some people do not allow us to do so, I am ready to stand as the early Christians stood, and say 'This is our faith, this is where we stand, and, if necessary, this is where we will die.'"

Ernest Bevin, the Secretary of the Transport Workers' Union, replied to me in what people described as a very telling and scathing speech. Anyone who wishes to read his strictures can do so by buying a copy of the Labour Party Conference Report for 1935. They will also be able to read that no single one of the colleagues who had urged me to remain as Leader, or anyone else, said a word in my defence. Perhaps this is only what I deserved.

for being rather stupid in trying to serve a party rather more than my principles, and remaining longer than was consistent with my beliefs

The General Election followed soon after, and I found myself snowed under with appeals from Labour candidates to speak on their behalf. I did my best to give support wherever I could, leaving my own division to my friends, who were led by my friend of forty years standing, Edward Cruse, L.C.C. At the end of the campaign I was returned with a record majority of 13,357. It is worth noticing that in my Election Address I asked for a mandate as follows

"I appeal to my fellow Christians, to people of all creeds, Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, old and young, to join me in a great crusade against this madness of war

"Send me to Parliament with a mandate to call the nation to one great, supreme effort for peace. If a strike threatens, or breaks out, everybody urges arbitration and conciliation. If peace is to be saved this is what we must do in international affairs. The Italian Abyssinian dispute is but an incident in the rapid march to barbarism which all mankind is treading. It is the powder magazines from the Baltic to the Black Sea, and from the American continent across the Pacific to Australia, which we have to fear

"I want power in your name to demand that our Government shall go to Geneva and summon the world to a new and nobler conception of life. Our nation is the most powerful, the most wealthy in the world. We control, apart from the Dominions, hundreds of millions of people, hold, for our own profit, huge territories rich in all natural resources needed for the

service of man Our great possessions bring us neither peace nor security. Like Rome, Persia, Assyria, and other great Empires, we have discovered that the fruits of domination bring us only 'Dead Sea Fruit' The day and the hour has come when, because of our faith in the Gospels, because we believe that Christ had, and still has, the words of eternal life both for this world and the next, we must put our all into the common pool of service

"At Geneva we must renounce imperialism, call upon all nations to join with us in a great endeavour to abolish the causes of war, and by so doing, usher in the days of Peace

"Do not believe that this is a dream It is the only realist policy for preventing war Modern wars are always waged for territory or markets The American Secretary of State, Mr Cordell Hull, and Sir Samuel Hoare, both admit that the problem which confronts us is one of the 'Haves' and 'Have nots' Both agree that it is the sharing of raw materials and markets for which we must aim Great capitalist combines, with the aid of the Government, control, for private gain, production and distribution of cotton and wheat, iron and steel, copper and tin, nickel and tea, rubber and pepper Surely Governments which can unite, organise, and sacrifice for war, can, if they so determine, organise together for peace Why should we aid private enterprise and restrict and expand production and markets, and create conditions that ultimately lead to war? It is much easier to co operate in friendly relationship than to fight and beggar ourselves and others "

After the General Election I went from one end of Britain to the other in company with my pacifist comrades of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Peace Pledge Union, Women's Co-operative Guild, and many labour and

religious organisations, speaking on behalf of the gospel of Pacifism. Our meetings were always packed. In Manchester, Liverpool, London, and Edinburgh, as many as two, and sometimes three overflow meetings were held. People listened and joined either the Peace Pledge Union, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, or other pacifist organisations. And so our propaganda has continued up and till the time of writing this book, when we are about to start on another great campaign.

This part of my story must contain, not merely a mention, but as strong a statement as I can make of deepest gratitude and thanks to my constituents for their never-failing confidence and help to me in all my days of trouble and difficulty. They are not all pacifists as I am. Some day, soon, they will be. But they are united in a great endeavour to prevent war and understand the means whereby war will be averted. I also want to pay my tribute of respect and admiration to the handful of colleagues in the House of Commons who, with much less public notice but with very great courage, hold high the banner of Pacifism in that Assembly. It has been good to be associated with so loyal and courageous a group of men. What can I say of the thousands who rally to us everywhere? At present we sometimes appear to be overborne by circumstances and conditions, but always hope, which is eternal, rises in our breasts and we face the tide of silent and vocal opposition, confident that time is on our side because it is easily demonstrable that reason and common sense is with us.

There is one thing which needs to be made clear. Although I consider it a very great privilege and a true honour to be chosen as leader of the Labour Party, it has

never been in my mind that any great sacrifice was made by me when I felt obliged to resign my position. I should have been much more unhappy and miserable conforming to a policy of which I could not honestly approve. For the sake of the younger people I would like to record the fact that I made no real sacrifice, and even had any sacrifice been made it would only have been dust and ashes compared with the sacrifice made by conscientious objectors during the Great War, and which they may be obliged, which God forbid, to make again should another war come, or compared with the sacrifices which many of my friends have been called upon to make during a strike or lock-out, or which men in the armed forces made during the war, or their loved ones and the loved ones of those others I mentioned endure when those near to them are killed in battle, wounded, or thrown into prison. No. We who are old, no matter what position we may sacrifice, cannot be classed as martyrs. We should be thankful that we are able to bear witness to the truth that is in us.

## *Chapter II*

### MY MESSAGE

My resignation from the leadership of the Labour Party brought me a huge correspondence from all over Britain. It also brought many letters from overseas. Early in 1936 Professor Kirby Page of America came to London for the purpose of discussing with Dr Salter, M P, and myself whether we would undertake a month's tour in the United States on behalf of peace, under the auspices of the Committee responsible for the Emergency Peace Campaign, which was to be launched during the end of April until May 28th. We agreed, and left Southampton on April 15th, arriving home again on June 4th. It is impossible for me to estimate the number of miles either of us travelled. I shall refer to this journey again later. I was fortunate in having with me my daughter, Mrs Raymond Postgate, without whose continual care and attention the trip could not have been made. Neither Dr Salter nor I expected or received any fee for our services. The Committee paid our expenses. We were glad to go, and although at the end of the tour we were all three rather tired and worn out, we arrived at Southampton in very good health and spirits, quite ready to face the



pressmen and photographers, and to receive with great pleasure and gratitude the welcome given by women members of the Labour Party at Southampton, and later by Dr Sheppard and a party of friends at Waterloo

This trip to America gave our movement great publicity, as it was known that I intended, through the good offices of the late Mr Bingham, the then United States Ambassador in London, to see the President, Mr Roosevelt, and other representative men and women. During my absence in America a small committee known as the Embassies of Reconciliation had been formed. It consists of Canon Raven, the Rev Henry Carter, Miss Ruth Fry, the Rev Nevin Sayre, M A, Professor Sigsmund Schultze, D D, Runham Brown, and Barrow Cadbury. The object of the committee is to send men and women to any part of the world where trouble and difficulty has arisen and where war is likely to break out, or has already broken out, for the purpose of inquiring into the causes and doing what is possible to bring about reconciliation between the conflicting parties. It can with truth be said that we endeavour to reconcile what on the surface appears to be irreconcilable. We start with the assumption that nobody is all good or all bad, and this is specially true of nations. There are many others who go about on these missions besides myself, it is quite accidental that my visits have received so much publicity. It is, however, necessary to make it clear that in my case *visiting* governments of revolutionists abroad commenced a long time ago. As far back as 1887 I proposed that a deputation of Last End workers should visit Ireland for

the purpose of seeing at first hand what was happening in that country under Mr Balfour's administration. A party of a dozen East-Enders was selected of whom I was one. We were led by a famous Non conformist Minister, Mr Fleming Williams of Hackney. Our expenses were largely met by Sir Samuel Montagu, then member of Parliament for Whitechapel and afterwards the first Lord Swaythling. During that visit we interviewed all sorts and conditions of people, and some of us, by our speeches, did our best to get imprisoned. The British Government, however, was much too wise to prosecute us, in fact, it did its utmost to make us think it welcomed our visit. Men and women who lived through the stormy period when Mr W. E. Forster was Liberal Chief Secretary for Ireland and Mr Balfour (afterwards Lord Balfour) held the same office under the Conservatives, will remember how hated both these men were because of coercion and the collection of rents. Mr Forster became known as "Buckshot" Forster because he was said to have ordered the use of buckshot by troops and policemen when firing on civilians. Mr Balfour became "Bloody" Balfour because he is said to have told the soldiers to shoot straight. Some years later I met Arthur Balfour as one of a deputation of Social Democrats appointed to discuss with him and his uncle, Lord Salisbury, the plight of the unemployed. I cannot remember the date. I discovered that "Bloody" Balfour was in private life and conversation a most charming personality, and also that he knew more about industry and the life of the workers than did his uncle or Mr Gladstone, whom we met later.

When I am told that statesmen "take me in", that

smooth words and promises impress me too easily, I take comfort from the fact that they are all alike and therefore cancel each other out in their efforts to impress people like me. All of them are men of ability, the ablest or the most simple and direct. None whom I have met has been the least patronising, and all of them speak with frankness about peace and war, and the causes which lead to disputes. I often wish they could speak publicly on these questions as clearly and sensibly as they do behind closed doors.

It is quite true that when I was young my generation had a very great respect for bishops and statesmen, and, indeed, for all kinds of people considered great; but it has never occurred to me to think any of them too great to be approached by ordinary people. My respect for people, rich or poor, is quite sincere and real, but it is not of such a character as to cause me any hesitation when meeting them. Looking back over my life I can truthfully say that more often than not my educated friends have been wrong and my uneducated friends right. Consequently, when discussing with my friends whether I should undertake to visit statesmen in the principal countries of Europe, including Italy and Germany, I had no hesitation in undertaking the task. I went from capital to capital for one purpose only—to try and persuade each Minister that wars are not inevitable; that increasing armaments made war more certain; and to urge them to join in a conference to discuss how to prevent war by removing the causes of war. I have spent over fifty years of my life not only earning my living in business, but also as a local government administrator. During

those years the policy I have stood for has been one of prevention of evil rather than spending all one's energies on dealing with effects of the causes which produce disease, dirt, poverty, and destitution. I also believe that advocating goodwill, seeing something of myself in others, and something of God in all of us, does help to create the kind of understanding atmosphere which will lead to peace.

I do not apologise for visiting any statesman or people. When any of us visit a foreign country we do so not because we necessarily support their form of government or desire to live under their rule. If there is to be peace between nations, each government must be responsible not to outsiders, but to its own people for the manner in which the nation concerned is governed. Even with all the hatred there is between those who champion and would go to war about Fascism and Communism, Governments governed by Fascists and Bolsheviks trade with each other and are represented respectively in Berlin, Rome, and Moscow. I am a Social Democrat and hope some day that Great Britain will evolve a truly democratic form of Socialism. Other nations may find social and industrial peace by other means—that is their affair not mine. Experience alone will prove who is right. At present no country as yet is able to claim that it has become an ideal state. We all have a good deal to learn about practical democracy. The one thing needed is for those who think we are democrats to make up our own minds how best we can express our ideals and leave other nations to do the same.

When the Bolshevik revolution took place in Russia and a Soviet Government was established, my colleagues

and I who were responsible for the *Daily Herald* supported the Russian nation in their appeal for fair play and the cessation of blockade and invasion carried on for a time by France, Britain, and America. I should have done the same whatever form of government had succeeded the Tsardom. During the past few years I have often wondered if the men who formed our Government in 1918-20, who are now loud in their condemnation of foreign intervention in Spain, ever give their minds such a rest as will enable them to remember that it was France, Britain, and America who, at the close of the Great War, and indeed, when the Soviets took power in Russia, invaded that great country and later blockaded it for some years, simply because they objected to Communism. Such intervention is always an international crime, whatever excuse governments make for their action. All individuals must ultimately work out their own salvation, socially, morally, spiritually, and so also must nations. There is no sense in imagining that mankind will allow itself to be divided into two forms of government and fight a world war in order to impose one or other form of government on all mankind.

During many centuries yet to come the world of men will study and argue and dispute as to the best methods of developing the people of the many varied races which inhabit this earth. Our business is to do our utmost to live side by side with each other in such a manner as will enable us to co-operate in sharing the world and its resources. My quest for peace carries me everywhere, into all lands irrespective of forms of government. It

is certain that no men are as black as their enemies paint them, or as good as their friends think they are. When I visited Lenin in Moscow during February 1920, he was regarded by many as a monster. I found him as gentle, reasonable and understanding as Lloyd George or Winston Churchill, but equally I found him as determined and ruthless in upholding the forms of government he thought good for Russia as they were for Great Britain. This does not mean that either statesman was completely right. It does mean that if any of us go round the world looking for statesmen who are perfect Christians or free from the guilt of coercion or bloodshed in defence of what they consider is their country's interest, we shall not find them. We must take people in power as we find them. We must also see behind them the great mass of people, those many hundreds of millions who only desire peace.

Our Embassies, therefore, go into all countries and speak with whoever will listen to them, pleading for understanding and co-operation. For myself, I do not go as a leader or even as a politician, but as one ordinary man talking to other ordinary men, striving to bring the minds of statesmen down to earth, asking them to realise whether they are travelling, and before it is too late to come together and at least try to find a way out. The world situation which called my friends and me from our homes on this mission for peace is such that in our view no effort should be spared by the humblest among us to rouse nations to the peril of drifting into war, which we are confident can be averted by the exercise of common sense.

Because this is so there is no reason for despair or for fatalistic fear that war is upon us. We must wake up to realities and make quite certain that we ourselves and our friends realise what another war would mean in terms of barbarism and devastating destruction. Chief of all, we must make our own nation understand it was the folly of statesmen who, at the close of the Great War, imposed on the defeated nations such penal terms of peace that reconciliation has up to the present been almost impossible. Europe is now reaping the harvest which always follows those who seek vengeance. No one thinks of Clemenceau, Lloyd George, or Wilson as more wicked than the average. They were all three extremely short-sighted and rather stupid in imagining it would be possible to secure peace through muddle-headed peace-making, such as they engaged in. "Muddle-headed", because they must have completely lost their heads if they ever believed it could be possible to secure peace with any nation possessed of self-respect by the imposition of a treaty based on punishment and vengeance. They imposed almost complete disarmament on the defeated, promising that this disarmament would be followed by universal disarmament. Since 1919 various pacts and agreements have been solemnly signed outlawing war. One of our leading statesmen said to me one day: "Peace will come when we statesmen give up signing pacts and agreements which we have no intention of honouring, even though the wireless and 'talkies' represent us as honest men. The whole world is waiting for simple honesty in human relationships." So cynical are Governments that no excuse or apology

is made for the undeniable fact that victors and vanquished are now more fully armed than in 1914, and that all the arts and crafts of war conspire to make weapons more scientific and destructive. This condition of affairs has come about with the tacit consent of Governments. Our own Government, acting without consultation with any other powers, made a naval agreement with Germany which enabled that nation to violate another of the terms imposed upon her by the Versailles Treaty. No one believes the present "mad hatter" armaments' race can continue without producing economic chaos and ruin in Europe. Statesmen and Parliaments, dictators and democrats, all seem struck with a sort of palsied helplessness. They all denounce what is happening, but none appears to imagine it is possible to find a way out of this rakes' march to ruin. The one thing certain is that every ruler and every statesman knows that all are to blame. They agree in saying that we are on the road to ruin, and persist in the folly of piling up ever increasing masses of material for use when destruction begins.

There is no intention in the minds of pacifists to charge either our own or any other Government with being more wicked or even more stupid than another. They are merely unable to think in a comprehensive sense except in terms of force. All the League of Nations and Governments think and prepare for is massed force and overwhelming armaments as a means of ensuring peace. They completely fail to understand that the one road to peace is by establishing collective justice, equity, and freedom between nations. Our complaint is that they also live in the past. Their minds are old, however



young may be their bodies. They fail to realise that although certain fundamental, racial, and cultural qualities appear to divide the nations, all peoples must, if they are to maintain life and improve their standard of living, secure, either by force or consent, access to raw materials, territories, and markets. When Allied statesmen, acting on the advice of financial and economic experts, imposed huge indemnities on the defeated nations, the least educated person acquainted with the elements of political economy knew that if those payments were made, both those who paid and those receiving payments would be ruined. This also may be said about Colonies too, it was easy to take them away, but who is there who now thinks it was wise to leave Germany stripped bare of any overseas possessions? The policy pursued at the close of the Great War was sheer lunacy. Statesmen and peoples must learn from the experience gained since 1919 that vengeance can never give us peace, but must bring ruin. Germany paid a bitter, indeed, a terrible price for the penal peace she inflicted on France in 1871. My readers may learn a good deal about this if they will read Liddell Hart's *Man of Orleans*, a life of Marshal Foch in two volumes, which has been issued at sixpence in the Penguin books. The Allies have paid and are still paying an even more terrible price for the blundering tactics pursued when fixing the terms of peace in 1919.

Had these treaties been fair and equitable, such as many previous conquerors would have imposed, we would not have seen the uprising of dictatorships or the economic chaos which Europe is now experiencing. The

Europe which rejected German friendship when offered by Ebert, Stresemann, and Brüning, has now been forced to cancel millions of pounds of Reparation claims, has seen the Rhineland reoccupied and fortified. People could not call in question this reoccupation of German territory, so, too, we find ourselves acquiescing in silence to the repudiation of many other parts of the penal treaties because we know it is not possible to embark on war against any nation which merely occupies its own territory and arms itself against potential enemies armed to the teeth along its frontiers, or against a nation which refuses to ruin completely its economic life by struggling to make payments in goods or money which no one, except those whose minds have been trained in economic bedlam, would ever have dreamed of imposing.

The men whose bodies lie buried in the soil of Flanders and France, or whose bones have whitened on the slopes of Gallipoli, left their homes and families to fight and if needs be to die, in what to them was a great crusade to make the world safe and free forever from the curse of war, by destroying once and for all the curse of militarism and to maintain intact such democratic freedom as existed in the world. Alas, all these great and noble ideas were basely betrayed, with the result that the world is becoming safe for only barbarism. I would like to repeat again and again this slogan "Safe for barbarism" until it becomes so firmly fixed in our minds that we will not need to be compelled to do our utmost to prevent such an ending to two thousand years of professed Christianity.

It is not only pacifists who tell the world that another

great war will end in barbarism It is men and women of all parties, all religions, and in every walk of life who proclaim this truth The present Prime Minister of Great Britain informed the House of Commons in a speech on war expenditure which he was asking the house to sanction, that his request was "madness", but must be undertaken because all other nations were engaged in the same mad expenditure You see what this means because others are mad we must become mad also I ask my readers this what sort of mentality is it which has seized mankind when a sane, good-hearted, peace loving man, such as is Neville Chamberlain, feels himself obliged to make such a statement? No ordinary person can explain why the House of Commons almost without protest should accept such reasoning, or, as I would prefer to describe it, such unreason, and then, by a great majority, vote the money which madness demands There is only one explanation on this war business mankind has lost its senses Statesmen, like every one else, fear to stand up to the bogey and just fall back on the stupid argument "The other fellow started it and we must be in the fashion and follow him" On this occasion it was neither Germany nor Italy who started the arms race It was the Allies who consistently refused to disarm and carry out their promise, made at the end of the war, that when disarming Germany and Austria they did so only as a preliminary step towards their own disarmament We know this promise was never honoured, as expenditure on armaments by the victorious Allies clearly proves It is facts such as these which compel us to send out our Ambassadors of Reconciliation We refuse, dark

though the outlook may be, to believe that war is inevitable. There is too much common sense left in the world to allow such a preventable catastrophe to take place. We consider it is imperative that we should compel members of the Government to tell us plainly, in language we can understand, who is the enemy we are going to fight, and what it is we are going to fight about. The old slogans "War for democracy", "War against militarism", "War against Fascism", "War against Bolshevism"—none of these have any meaning because our lords and masters have told us that the outcome of another great war must be barbarism. There will be no victors, all will be vanquished. Everything we hoped for will be lost. Therefore I repeat, all who love peace must drive home these facts continuously. Once they are understood by the masses there will be an end to war preparations, and instead people will force whatever Government is in power to adopt the common sense policy of inviting nations to come together and assist each other to remove the causes of war.

It is sometimes argued against us that wars, both civil and international, do settle for long periods questions of government and the possession of territories. But war has never given the world peace. All history which I have read proves that while it is true that Great Powers have at various periods conquered and subdued the then known world, it is also true that peace has never been secured throughout the conquered territories. Great Britain is just now at peace, so it is said, but for months past we have been fighting on the North West Frontier of India, and dealing with repeated disturbances and

murders in other parts of that country. We have also been engaged in an almost ceaseless effort to restore and preserve peace in Palestine. This is war on a small scale. A British statesman once said "Never a day passes but Britain is engaged in a small war in some part of the British Dominions." I am sure this was also true of Rome and all other ancient empires.

It cannot be denied that many splendid men and women from this country and others have given their lives in service for and on behalf of the people of India and in other parts of the world. It is, however, also true that all that is vital in Indian public life desires to see an end of British rule. Even at this moment of writing I read of a campaign being carried on by aerial and mechanical land warfare against the unsettled hill tribes on the North West Frontier of India. Any who wish to know more of this struggle should read a book by that great servant of India, Charles Andrews, entitled *The Challenge of the North West Frontier*. He gives a quotation which may be as well applied to Europe as to India. "When great kings go to war it is the poor grass which is trodden under foot." We could of course enlarge on this and say "When democrats and dictators go to war, it is the toiling masses and their homes and women and children which will be blown to smithereens."

Mr Andrews in his book gives the following quotation from a speech made in the Indian Assembly at Simla by Dr Khan Salub, a representative frontier tribesman. He said

"The whole system of aerial bombing of defenceless villages is immoral. It is based on discrimination and

exploitation and ultimately brings about its own destruction. I am sure the treatment this Government is meting out to the frontier tribesmen to day is enough to bring about its end in the near future. To say I can lay before this House the exact number of women and children killed, buffaloes, sheep, cows, and goats destroyed, houses of poor Pathians destroyed, will not be true. On the 19th August, 1936, aeroplanes began bombing the homes of tribesmen. As for giving them notice, the first notice which I saw appeared in the Peshawar Press on August 22nd. You hear again and again through Government Commissioners that people are warned to get out of their homes. I can assure you the first warning they get is when a bomb is dropped on them from aeroplanes.

'As soon as this warning is dropped on them, which may cost some lives, some do clear out of their houses. Others stay. This will be understood by those who understand Pathian mentality. They hate to leave their houses and prefer to be buried in them.'

The Government has issued a White Paper giving its views on this subject, and readers interested can buy a copy from H.M. Stationery Office, Westminster, and form their own judgment. My object is to make it clear that we British people allow bombing of defenceless villages which, it is acknowledged, destroys houses, flocks, and herds, and which wounds and kills some of the inhabitants. We do this in order to restore peace. France and other countries make the same claim when they engage in aerial warfare.

I am in no position to judge from war experience if one form of killing is better than another, but such air

raids as I witnessed in London and have read of in India, Spain, Shanghai, and elsewhere, convince me that we have declined very badly in mentality and morals, to say nothing of religion, when such a fine man in every respect as one of my colleagues in the late Labour Government was able to convince himself that such warfare could, by any stretch of imagination, be described as merciful. I repeat war is brutal and bestial and cannot be made merciful or humane.

I do not for a moment argue that British imperialism is worse than others. In some ways it is more paternal, but when opposed we are as brutal as others. I should not have called attention to this North-West Frontier war had it been a war of the past, but it was taking place while the Abyssinian and Spanish wars were receiving considerable attention in Britain. I repeat that even in peace times great empires always have some small war on their hands. Even under the mandate system we have found ourselves faced with war in Palestine, a war which is not yet settled because of conflicting interests which are very difficult to adjust. I must repeat that I do not in any way think our rulers more inhuman than others. It is conditions which make most people what they are, my complaint is we do not give as much attention to the causes of disorder as we should.

Much as I disliked and opposed the Government of India Act when it came before Parliament, I do acknowledge that the authors of that Act, within certain well-defined limitations, did honestly wish to do something which would enable Indians to take a more active part in the government of their own land. The scheme is

spoiled because ultimate power rests with the governors and the Viceroy. The scheme is being tried out in part, and the Congress Party is tackling the difficult business of provincial government in a manly manner. Outsiders like myself can only hope they will be successful. If this scheme becomes capable of adaptation and expansion, and in the near future a British Government is willing peacefully to hand over the government and control of India to the Indian people, it will be one of the biggest steps towards universal peace the world has yet seen. Such action by our people would convince the world that we had learned and profited by the lesson which the rise and fall of other empires has taught us. The great expansion of empires for a time creates great riches gained by conquest, and the impression of permanence. But after a time the greatness disappears, giving way before a mental, moral, and material decay at the centre, proving that as with individuals so also with nations, parasitism means inevitable destruction. Great Britain has lived and apparently prospered in a similar manner to other empires—the form may be different but the result the same. The sword brings sword, force creates force.

It is, however, true that war will never be abolished through fear of its consequences, neither will declarations of its sinfulness suffice to secure its abolition. My opposition to war is based on my Christian faith. My life's experience leaves my belief in the efficacy of the teachings of Jesus applied to life as the one and only way of salvation for us erring men and women. The well worn saying 'Ye must be born again' has taken hold of me in a



way nothing else has done. We must see life with a new vision, a vision with which sages, prophets, and martyrs were gifted down the ages. The new truth which must enter our lives is the truth which will create the spirit of brotherhood, comradeship, and love. It can only come to any of us, the worst as the best, when we are willing to accept as true the doctrine which regards all human life as sacred. Not all human life is perfect. Where would you or I be if that were so? No. It means the consciousness which enables us to see ourselves in others and God in us all. Those who cannot follow this rather hard doctrine must be patient with those whose faith rests on such a foundation. We claim no superiority over others, because whoever else does not quite know us, we do know ourselves and our failings, and we state our view so dogmatically because to us it is an unchallengeable part of our lives. But this truth we hold is one which we are certain will, in one form or another, save the world, and will do so because it contains within itself everything needed for the redemption of the race.

Reasonable people cannot accept the sterile doctrine that "Earth is a desert drear, Heaven is my home." No. We who take our stand on the teaching of Jesus, do so because we know it contains the promise of this life as well as the life to come. When the scholar asked "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?", the answer came straight and clear. "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself." This is all so simple that it needs no explaining, no vain repetition. To love God—the highest, the best we can think of—and our neighbour as

ourselves For two thousand years this truth, this challenge, has been flung out on the world, often amid terrible persecution, suffering, and death People of all races, all classes, have striven haltingly for this truth, not always using the same words, but always pressing forward the oneness of human life The religion which makes me humble, which sometimes against my will compels me to make a stand, is a religion which forces on to me the belief that the people who lead us and call themselves worldly wise and practical are wrong They are the idle dreamers, they are the dwellers in Cloud cuckoo land—whatever that may mean—and it is the relatively speaking “feeble band and few” who are right And we are right because we understand Jesus as a realist, One who came to the world, whether we accept Him as the Son of God in the literal sense according to the creeds of the Church, or whether we accept Him as a great teacher to teach us how to live, and when He taught us the Lord’s Prayer, He intended us to forgive as we hope to be forgiven, and when He told us to pray “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven” He was not misleading us with mere words of no meaning, but teaching us the sublime, eternal truth that His will can be done and shall be done once our minds are born again with the knowledge that all that is needed to save the world is the application of His doctrine of Love to the affairs of our everyday life

I go out on these journeys as others of my colleagues go out, striving to carry a perfectly simple message of hope to the people of all lands we visit, and a direct challenge to Christian and other statesmen, calling upon them to discuss and settle the questions which lead to war through

the application of reason and common sense We are not pessimists, our warnings are given to stir people to action, to compel acceptance of the fact that we are here to live lives of abundance Sin is a relative term Not one of us is good enough or possessed of enough knowledge to be able properly to judge others God who knows all forgives all This belief prevents me passing judgment on others We may condemn actions and words it is not for me or for you to judge the motives of others

When in 1931 I became leader of the Labour Party, I tried my utmost to direct the thoughts and actions of the Party in relation to foreign affairs along one line, which can best be described as a demand that before we gave up the struggle for peace and plunged into the armaments race, the British Government should either itself or through the League of Nations, or in some other way, summon a new world conference for the purpose of discussing the causes of war No one minimises the difficulties, no one expects immediate or instantaneous results from such a conference It is, however, quite certain that if statesmen once gathered round a table with an agenda headed by the one and only question which it is imperative should be discussed, and discussed at once, that is, "Why are we all arming? Why are we doing our utmost to force mankind into barbarism?", the actual realism of these questions would force statesmen to cease discussing abstractions and compel them to discuss frankly and fully the causes which in their opinion force the suicidal madness of armaments upon them It is certain that if all the statesmen I have met were to meet in the

same friendly manner as I was met, they would soon discover that being honest and straightforward with each other is the one and only way of averting war, that they must give up diplomacy and instead think and speak to each other as men

### *Chapter III*

#### THE EMERGENCY PEACE CAMPAIGN

My trip to the United States was the first of my travels in search of peace. I remember very clearly my actual starting. We were a happy boisterous crowd, led by our dearly beloved comrade the late Canon H. R. L. Sheppard, which gathered at Waterloo station on the morning of Wednesday, April 17th, 1935. Taxi drivers, porters, guards, pressmen, headed by Hannen Swaffer, photographers by the score, and the general public, came to wish us Godspeed; and among the crowd it was possible to pick out comrades and friends from all sections of our people.

I have often said that it is for me a very happy experience to hear myself spoken well of and cheered by my friends. There was something about this particular gathering which remained with me all through the tiresome, wearying journeyings across the continent of America. Once before, in November, 1913, I had left the same station for the same destination, cheered by a most enthusiastic group of friends. I was then travelling to the United States with my wife as a guest of my friends Joseph and Mary Fels to lecture on all sorts of political questions. It was

an enjoyable trip and brought me many friends whose kindness will always remain a blessed cherished memory. This last time when we left with cheers and "God bless you" ringing in our ears, there came an awakening in my mind which seemed to make me understand that we were going forth on a great mission. My former mission, though apparently different, was actually on similar lines. Then I was campaigning for women's suffrage, Home Rule for Ireland, and Socialism. There is a community of interests connecting all movements seeking to establish peace abroad and equality and freedom at home.

After the usual short delay we found ourselves on board the *Berengaria*, sailing away to Cherbourg and thence to New York. I found among my fellow passengers some who I thought were out and out pacifists but who had now become pacifists with a great big "But." However, the *Berengaria* is a fine ship and the voyage was a very pleasant one. Many of the passengers were only too anxious to talk to us and discuss how war could be averted. The people of Britain who seldom go abroad have little idea how much war is dreaded by people in other lands. Englishmen have in the past been protected by the geographical fact that England is an island. Whatever may happen should another great war come, it is true we who lived in Britain during the last war did not face such tragic, hopeless conditions of misery, destitution, and wholesale slaughter and destruction as was inflicted on masses of people whose only crime was that they lived in the pathway of conquering armies. The men most keen in discussion were business men, who astonished me by the fatalistic attitude they appeared to adopt towards

international relationships. There seemed in their minds a very dreadful impression that nothing could save us except a miracle. At the same time there seemed to be very little hatred of Germany or any other country, though there was a very determined hatred of the persecution of Jews and other people. All of the people I talked to seemed to be quite unable to understand the fearful campaign of racial discrimination in Germany and other parts of Europe. Herr Hitler can have no idea how universal is the condemnation of his policy of anti-Semitism. I found it difficult to discover what was in their minds concerning Abyssinia and China. The only clear reaction was negative: no one seemed to think that Britain or America should risk war except in defence of their own interests, and few believed in the League of Nations' idea of collective security through massed force. We discussed constantly and without decision the question of where the massed force was to be found. There was always firm agreement about the need for a League, but without exception it was contended that it must be a League within which all nations, great and small, must find a place, a League whose business it should be to organise commissions and international courts for the purpose of considering how to remove the causes of war, but mainly the whole argument centred round the one proposition: How can trade be extended and consumption be brought into relationship with the productive power of the world?

We found much support for our campaign in quite unexpected quarters, even among those who wholly refused to accept our absolute pacifist attitude towards

war. Some of the business people whole-heartedly supported our proposal for an international conference to discuss the economic plight of the world and the sharing of territories and markets, but there was scepticism because of the failure of the London Conference. We pointed out that Britain and America were now acting in co-operation for the purpose of safeguarding the dollar and the pound, although they had refused even to discuss this in 1933 when the need for some action was as urgent then as now, and succeeded in convincing quite a number of those with whom we talked that this in itself was an encouraging sign. They had little sympathy with Communism or Socialism, and not all of them were democrats, but it was generally agreed that the one problem before the world was how to distribute abundance. The Americans with whom we talked were bewildered and nonplussed when speaking of the destitution and starvation in the United States.

The sailors with whom I talked were most emphatically anti-war, though there was no doubt that they would all fight if war came. They did not express dislike of any nation, though they too detested Jew-baiting and persecution for whatever reason. They were mostly men who had fought in the last war and were convinced that wars settle nothing and that another war would leave every nation in ruins. They seemed to have, perhaps because of their experience, a deeper realisation of the futility of war than my fellow-travellers.

Life on board a great liner is an education in itself. A very little observation reveals the temperament and outlook of some of the passengers. Many of them take



their exercise very seriously indeed, one or two women raced round the promenade deck as if life itself depended upon how many miles they could cover before lunch. Others played deck-tennis, quoits, and all the other games provided by a thoughtful shipping company. I spent most of my time loafing, looking at others, and listening to them. I gave my tongue and brain some rest, and as my injured leg would not stand for much walking, I gave my body a rest as well. I was asked during the voyage to preside at a gathering called to raise funds for an organisation which exists to help the dependents of seafarers who meet with accident or death while following their occupation at sea. The meeting was held in the cinema after the afternoon film show, and we raised a decent sum, well up to the average. This function revealed a true spirit of friendship between officers, men, and passengers, and in a curious way made us feel much more friendly towards each other, at least for a few hours.

When we were about two days from New York I received a telephone call from Philadelphia, asking if I would fly from New York to Washington, a distance of about two hundred miles. Without hesitation I said no. I am a feeble kind of person where height is concerned, and no amount of persuasion would tempt me to undertake an aerial flight. My friend said he would telephone me again later—as calmly as if I were in my own home and he in the same district. Speaking from aboard ship across the ocean to America was a great experience for me. It revealed to me one of the marvels of our time and made me realise what a blessed invention wireless is in keeping sailors in touch with land when on their way across the vast seas.

A few hours later my friend telephoned to me again and informed me that when our ship dropped anchor outside New York for medical officers, customs officials, and pressmen to come aboard, a tug would come alongside to take us off, because, as he explained, I was required to address a big gathering of Senators, Congressmen, and other public men in Washington, that evening, who were attending a dinner organised by the National Peace Council of America, and only by doing this could we cover the two hundred miles in time by train. This brilliant notion of taking us off had not, unfortunately, been communicated officially to the Captain and officers, and when an ancient looking steam tug loaded with all kinds of gear drew alongside, no one knew what to do. After some argument our baggage was released and we were free to go. We stood at an opening low down in the side of the boat and wondered how we could possibly get down the further four feet and across the expanse of water between us and the tug. It was actually about one and a half yards wide, but to us it seemed a vast expanse. Able-bodied seamen clamber down rope ladders and jump across—but we weren't seamen and I with my injured leg was not even able bodied. Besides, both boats were rolling and it seemed that when one rolled one way the other rolled the other, making the gap even wider. I do not think anyone was to blame for our predicament. The suggestion that we should leave the boat in this unusual way arrived only a few minutes before we were due to take on the medical officers and others, and it had taken some time to reach the authorities on board. However, it was left to two sailors, who can always

be relied upon in an emergency, to think of a way out, and soon they appeared with a couple of thin hatchways made of match-lining—the sort which are used to protect the deck when unloading cargo. These, placed one on top of the other, just reached from the ship to the tug, at a steep angle, and with much swaying gave us a perilous gangway. They bent ominously under my weight and I had an uncomfortable feeling that I was walking the plank. With much holding of hands and breath we succeeded in getting across and finally steamed away, followed by friendly cheers and farewells from the *Berengaria*.

On board the tug, which was about thirty feet long, with a small cabin in the centre, we found pressmen and newsreel men waiting for us, and there and then I made a series of "talkies" for incorporation in newsreels. How this was done I shall never understand. The tug tossed and pitched, belched out black smoke and soot, and "chug chugged" so loudly that it was difficult to hear oneself speak, and it was impossible to believe that the pictures would ever be clear enough to be seen or my voice loud enough to be heard. But I am told that they were shown not only all over the United States, but in England, too. I rather fear they must have portrayed me as rolling like an inexperienced sailor, or even worse, as a person who had had one over the eight! But I was then, and still am, a convinced total abstainer.

We were met on the tug by some of our old friends, and my daughter and I were delighted to meet our friend Mark Starr, a one time lecturer for the National Council of Labour Colleges, and members of the Emergency Peace

Campaign Committee Members of the Society of Friends have a way with them which dispels doubts and fears, and we soon lost that feeling of loneliness and strangeness which is inevitable when first arriving in an unfamiliar country. We were piled into taxis on reaching the dock and informed that we were on the way to Pennsylvania Station where we would catch a train for Washington. When I very mildly suggested that as we had only just arrived we might have a little rest before we started on a further journey, we were at once assured that if we waited we should get both rest and food on the train! And as one friend assured me, I would be as fit as a fiddle when we arrived in Washington.

We arrived in Washington at eight o'clock that night. We hurled ourselves into more taxis and raced to the hotel where the Dinner was in progress. I must say with gratitude that the overwhelming warmth of the reception we received more than made up for all the hurry and scurry we had gone through since leaving the ship. The dining hall was fitted with tremendous arc lamps for film purposes, in the face of which I talked for about forty minutes. I felt as if I were being roasted, baked, and boiled all in one operation, and must have lost pounds of superfluous fat during that speech. It was my first experience of film publicity on a big scale. My home experience had been limited to pictures taken of me in hospital, small talkies for the Board of Agriculture, and one or two political and social talks in my own garden—lasting just a few minutes. Here in Washington, trying to see my audience through the intense glare, and striving to make my brain work in the intense heat, I was not

certain at first if I were on my head or my feet But gradually I became accustomed to it and found myself making a speech in much the usual manner—I forgot the audience and the fact that I was in Washington, and spoke as I would speak to a London audience Others, not I, know how successful that speech was, I can only say that at the end I was given a great ovation

When it was over I was taken to another room to broadcast a peace message to the nation It had been, arranged that Mrs Roosevelt should broadcast a message immediately before me, but she was unable to do so and a friend took her place, reading Mrs Roosevelt's line appeal to the nation on behalf of peace I must point out here, that although the driving power behind this campaign was mainly pacifist, the Committee included peace-makers who did not accept the majority view of out-and-out-pacifism The slogan of the Campaign was "Keep America out of War" My broadcast, however, was on purely pacifist lines and ran as follows

"I bring you love and good wishes from my comrades and friends in Britain

"We earnestly hope that your great nation will join the peoples of other lands in a mighty effort to sweep away all economic, political, and other causes which create hatred, bitterness, and strife between nations, and which ultimately drive them to war

"In company with my friend Dr Salter, I have come to take part in a world wide movement organised by the Emergency Peace Campaign on behalf of peace Peace is one and indivisible World economic conditions are such that war benefits neither victors nor vanquished All suffer alike So true is it that God is not mocked

whatsoever a man or a nation soweth that also shall he reap \

“The last Great War was one of the most futile, useless examples of human folly the world has ever experienced. A generation of the bravest and best of the youth and manhood of all nations was slaughtered and maimed in body and mind, in a vain effort to destroy war by war, and to wipe out autocracy and militarism by universal slaughter. The peace imposed on the defeated nations has left a bitter heritage of hatred and insecurity. In all lands, not least in yours, the common people long for peace. They are not interested in slaughter. Mothers who bring boys into the world do not desire that their babies shall grow to manhood for the purpose of slaying the baby boys of other mothers.”

“In spite of the fact that everyone wants peace, all governments prepare for war. Europe lives through one crisis after another. At the end of each, catastrophe seems to come nearer, and an increasing effort is made to produce more efficient weapons of slaughter and destruction. Europe has come to this pass that statesmen who are quite decent, friendly people in private life, calmly tell us that in the next war between civilised nations, the only chance of success is to murder more women and children belonging to the enemy quicker than he can kill yours. We know what this kind of civilised Christian warfare means, when we remember the cruel butchery of Chinese people by Japanese bombardment, and the Christian methods of civilisation employed by the Italians in Abyssinia.

“What are we, who call ourselves Christians, going to do about this? Shall we continue to support the policy ‘Necessity knows no law’, and again send our youth to slay and be slain in a futile effort to stay the plague of war? Or will we take the Gospel message at

its face value, accepting it in spirit and in truth as the law of life?

"The Gospel words are so often used unmeaningly that I ought to make it clear that what I mean is simply this. That each one of us, when any chance or danger of war comes near, should make a definite decision not to have anything to do with it, but to oppose it in every way. No matter how difficult the circumstances, Christian pacifists must themselves firmly say 'No'.

"Unless we are prepared to see the whole of our present civilisation wrecked, we must turn to Jesus of Nazareth and without any reserve accept as true his statement that love and service are the law in life, and that taking the sword against those we think of as enemies, means death. Christian nations must make a stand on this question and make it now. There is no time to lose if we are to escape destruction.

"Is there a Christian listening to me who imagines that Jesus who loved and cared for little children would, for any reason, ascend in an aeroplane and rain bombs on children whose only crime is that they are the children of their parents?

"Does anyone think St. Francis of Assisi would be found doing such a thing? Of course not. Then I ask you. Why do we old men and women ask our brave, courageous young people to do anything of the kind? Our realist religion demands of us that we shall find the way to remove the causes of war. The Kingdom of Heaven is within us. Our duty is, by God's good grace, to bring that Kingdom out of our selves and by our actions demonstrate that it is possible to live as Christ teaches us we should live. There is neither sense nor reason in preaching the gospel of love if in our hearts we think the Gospel message an idle dream of something unattainable.

"Religion is dying before our eyes because of this

## \* MY QUIST FOR PEACE

dreadful apostasy. If Christian ministers decide that the principles of our religion cannot be practised, we ought to close up our churches and cease praying in our Parliaments. But our religion is a realist and practical one. The price of peace is much more worthy to be paid than is the price of war. Christian nations, such as my own people and yours, must acknowledge the folly and futility of Imperialism. The British flag flies over the Seven Seas. We own and control vast populations and enormous territories. In spite of this, in fact, *because* of this vast empire, we are never at peace or secure. A few other nations are in like case. They have gained great material possessions and to a large extent lost their own souls.

"Other nations, foolishly thinking imperial glory, power, and domination over others is not a mere Will o' the Wisp, but something substantial, now desire to enter the field of conquest and, as of old, challenge the supremacy of those who entered the race earlier. We shall not meet this challenge satisfactorily by war or subterfuge. We must realise we are living at the end of another phase in the development of the human race. We must not accept the fatalistic doctrine of the inevitability of war and destruction, that because previous civilisations have collapsed into chaos, so also must ours follow the same road to destruction. No such fatalism is unworthy of the most ignorant in our midst.

"Especially must we who are Christians challenge this cowardly acquiescence in man made catastrophe. There is yet time to transform our civilisation from a competitive mass of competing nations into a co-operative unity working with each other for the good of all. We see everywhere great combinations of international combines, organising and controlling raw materials and markets for private gain. Everywhere



we see the powers of production enormously increased. And everywhere there is an unsatisfied demand from millions of people for the goods that at present cannot be distributed and used. I want 'Christians of all nations to make a united demand that here and now an entirely new League of Nations shall be formed—a league representative of all nations, including India, Egypt, and the African peoples. A world conference for this purpose should be summoned immediately. We must put a stop to the incessant chatter about armaments, and face realities.

"The object of such a league must be to win collective security through the removal of the causes of war. Our conception of a League of Nations is of one based on the principles of equality of rights for all people, not rights to fortify frontiers and kill one another, but rights which entail duties—the duty of sharing knowledge, wisdom, and understanding with each other. We must sink our individualism, our nationalism, in the life of all peoples. Lose our lives and find them in the life of humanity. A League of Nations led by those nations willing to follow Christ would win support from the peoples of the whole world.

"Won't you who are listening all join in this work of appeasement? The toil and thought and wealth put into the organisation of armaments and war are colossal. The enthusiasm evoked when war breaks out crushes all opposition. Now is the time to stop war by all who profess to follow Christ uniting in a great demand to all governments that the time, energy, wealth, and organising capacity devoted to war shall cease, and instead, the best brains of all lands shall be used for organising a new international commonwealth of all peoples.

"This is the natural outcome of economic progress. It is the culmination of all human effort and is the

one way by which we can fulfil the divine law 'Love thy neighbour as thyself, this do and thou shalt live' "

Before our broadcasts the Mayor of Philadelphia rang the historic bell which welcomed the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and which is kept in the Old Hall in Philadelphia. The Mayor also made an appeal to every citizen throughout the States to join in this campaign in order to help bring peace to the world and to keep America out of war.

By this time it was past midnight, and I found myself walking about almost asleep. We had lost Dr Salter, who, we were told, had gone off on a midnight train to start his campaign in another State. So I suggested bed, only to be told that we must be up soon after six o'clock in the morning in order to get back to New York. Well, we did it all according to schedule and arrived in time for a luncheon meeting. A Socialist bishop presided at the luncheon, and with him was a very old friend, the Rev Marmaduke Hare, who many years ago was Rector of Bow, where I still live. We were a jolly part of several hundreds representing all sorts of religions and opinions. We discussed Socialism, Communism and Fascism, and many other "isms", and all agreed that mankind had the power to get all the happiness it needs once it has the common sense to co-operate one with the other. I wonder sometimes if any of us live to see the end of poverty and destitution, what we will find to talk about.

After this luncheon meeting was over I was able to go

to my hotel, but not to rest. Old and new friends called to see us and we were overwhelmed with invitations of all kinds, which, because ours was a business tour, we were unable to accept. I was obliged to rest during what free time came our way. At eight o'clock that evening I found myself facing a huge audience in the Carnegie Hall. There were other speakers and a great many preliminaries. A large number of telegrams were read, telling where the campaign had started in other parts of America, and messages from scores of organisations, colleges, churches, and trade unions, including the American Federation of Labour. Norman Thomas, leader of the Socialist Party, gave us his blessing. Then came a scene such as I have never before witnessed. A number of carrier pigeons flew into the hall to their trainer, who detached messages from their legs. One addressed to me came from the American Federation of Labour, wishing the campaign and myself success. The speeches then began. College students told us how a million of their colleagues and many professors had engaged in a stay-in strike for twenty-four hours, some remaining inside and some outside the school and college buildings, for the purpose of making the nation understand that the youth of America intended something better should happen to their lives than mass suicide. Here I heard for the first time of the ingenious proposal that Congress should immediately pass a bill providing pensions for the veterans of the *next* war. This at first sounded fantastic, but as I listened, it seemed almost like common sense that these young people should try to make the public understand that pensions when dead are no satisfaction to those

forced to the shambles of war. The girls demanded that provision be made to enable them to visit future battle-fields in order to choose where they wished their loved ones to be buried. Wherever I went these youngsters were represented, and I felt it was good to meet and listen to them.

At about ten o'clock I made my speech and spoke for about forty minutes. I received a great welcome and was afterwards hustled off to speak from the wireless station owned and controlled by organised labour, and established in the memory of Eugene Debs. There was no restriction on what I should say, either here or anywhere else in America. In only one instance did I use a manuscript, and that was the first night in Washington.

The broadcast finished at about midnight, and after I had met and spoken to many old friends I was allowed to go to bed, but not until I had received a friendly message informing me that we must be up early in the morning in order to get to Philadelphia to speak at a luncheon meeting and address an evening meeting in the biggest hall in the city. This day was typical of many others. The pressmen made me reply to questions which to them were new, but to me as old as the hills. Friends I had met in 1913-14 came in numbers to welcome me, and it was pleasant to know I was so kindly remembered.

I wanted to say. This first campaign luncheon in Philadelphia was a great experience. Before I spoke, Kirby Pogo made a great appeal for funds, and his persuasiveness realised a fairly large sum towards the expenses of the campaign. If cheers were anything to go by, the audience seemed to appreciate my talk. The Mayor of the town presided, and spoke of me as if he had known me for many years. I understand he is an excellent administrator and, in fact, manages the town.

Except for a meeting later in Kansas City, the evening meeting in Philadelphia was the biggest of the tour. It was held in the Academy of Music, a fine concert-hall with perfect acoustics, and I found it easy to put across my forty-minutes' talk. The audience of over four thousand was very enthusiastic and sent me home—to a railway train—very tired, but also very happy. We were to be in Washington again early the next morning and to do this we were obliged to sleep in the train. We left the train at about seven a.m. in Washington and went with relief to our hotel to indulge in hot baths and breakfast. Soon after eight o'clock a friend arrived and helped to make our day educative and enjoyable. I was able to meet the Minister of Labour, Miss Perkins, and her staff. My impression is that in all social legislation connected with trade unions and the masses, the Government of Washington follows very closely the lines we have adopted, which in turn, before the war, were copied to a large extent from Germany. Payments to the unemployed were not standardized as are ours. I was interested in the fact that the whole organisation of social services were being improvised. We in this country

what could not immediately be consumed, and thus defying all the so-called laws of political economy and to a small extent practising true economy by carrying into practice the principle that food is produced to be consumed, and clothes, houses, and all other commodities to be used. These courageous people did not limit their attention to manual labourers, but attended also to the needs of artists and intellectuals who were in need, and to the coloured workers as well as the white. Rather than allow these men and women to remain idle, the Government provided them with materials with which they could keep their hands in, so to speak. Studios were provided for artists, musicians were called together for rehearsals, and actors were given certain theatres in which they could produce their plays. I mention all these because it is this spirit which we need in international affairs.

Roosevelt and his band of relatively young people were big enough to cast out fear. They are not Socialists, I doubt if any are. But they were faced with economic chaos. I was told that for some time, when the schemes were being drafted and discussed, the President and his chosen friends would meet early night after night, take one or more subjects for discussion and at a certain moment, agreed on before hand, take a decision. Could I organise my world economic conference, I should organise it on similar lines.

Some people will reply that no fundamental problem is yet settled in the United States. I agree that the world must be very much older before in any country we can say the fundamental problems are settled. This can only come as a result of the social ownership of the means of

you can see the other end passing you on a parallel line running in the opposite direction. We travelled along the banks of the splendid wide rivers for many sunny hours, and got an idea of the size of that great country which no map, however large, could possibly give. I tried to sing *Shenandoah* as we travelled along the Missouri. I say sing but it was really a kind of humming to myself.

I do not propose to weary my readers with vain repetition about meetings. They were all extremely friendly and the biggest was in Kansas City, in the New Municipal Auditorium, a beautiful modern building with a car drive right up to the platform—you stepped from your car, passed through a door, and there was your audience! There were about 6000 people present at this meeting and they had come through one of the most torrential rain and thunder storms I have ever seen. Our smallest meeting was at Akron, where four hundred gathered on a Saturday night. The average attendance of the twenty three evening meetings was about 1500. The luncheon meetings varied considerably and were difficult to estimate. I addressed some meetings which were not part of the campaign. At Loomis School, Windsor, I spoke to 500 boys, at St. Louis to a meeting organised by the Women's International League, at Harvard to a bonnie group of undergraduate hecklers, at Ann Arbor University to the students, and I also spoke at the International Methodist Conference at Columbus and the Conference of the old established Unitarian Church at Boston.

Nobody could have received better treatment or a warmer welcome, whether from audiences or the State

out of war. He is, I am glad to say, a relatively young man. I wish him many, many more years of active, happy service in the cause of peace and goodwill. The other two men were Rabbi Isserman of St. Louis and Rabbi Bernstein of Rochester. These two young men were called up to serve in the Great War and passed through their training as soldiers. Both left the service, as did many others, detesting the horrible business. I always felt better after hearing them speak because of their simplicity and optimism. But though I mention these three men specially, I do so only because they were most often with me. Catholics, Protestants, Republicans, Democrats, Socialists, and some Communists were also among our supporters. I ought also to say some women speakers took part in the campaign, including Miss Kathleen Norris, the author, Miss Mary Wooley, a judge, and others.

Our most enjoyable week-end was spent in the home of the head master of Loomis School, Windsor, Connecticut—Mr. Batchelder. We arrived early one Saturday morning and found ourselves at once at home in every sense of the word. Mrs. Batchelder is a celebrated sculptor. Both she and her husband conspired to give us rest, recreation, and some knowledge of the school. I cannot say much about the school organisation, but I was intensely interested in the boys, hundreds of them, all ages, all classes of society, all looking as boys should—healthy, bright eyed, and happy. I enjoyed the morning service and was glad to be able in a short address to wish them all Godspeed. Later on in the year some of these Loomis boys looked me up in London. I wish millions of boys



and girls from all countries could visit each other as these boys do

I have said little of the press. As in all countries wherever we went we were photographed and interviewed. The local papers always gave us a good show, and the State and national press, though not over generous, were always quite friendly and treated the campaign with great respect.

Our speaking tour ended in Boston, and here I made my last national broadcast. Speaking over the air is easier than in this country. My addresses were all extempore except the one already mentioned from Washington, and a good number were broadcast in Canada as well as the United States. I found it hard to believe that as I spoke to a big audience at midday in Buffalo my address was also being heard in Canada. At Cleveland my addresses to the Annual Socialist Conference and the public demonstration were also broadcast through the States and Canada. This conference, led by Norman Thomas, was very much on my side on the question of peace, and allowed a "talkie" to be made of my speeches to the Conference. I think it was as efficiently organised as similar British conferences. There was considerable discussion and disagreement about policy, but in quite a friendly atmosphere although the differences were very acute. The proceedings concluded with what amounted to a vote of confidence in Norman Thomas and his forward policy.

My main object in visiting America was to take part in the Peace Campaign and all other activities were subject to this one consideration. "How best to make

the campaign a success." There was however one exception. I determined to see as many public and private people as possible, more especially those interested in peace and international affairs, and to discuss with them the attitude of American men and women towards the problems affecting other nations, especially towards the League of Nations. After many talks, I was given the following as the official programme of the propagandists for the League of Nations.

### STATEMENT ON REORGANISATION OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

*by*

### THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

The conquests of Ethiopia and Manchuria confront the world with a failure of the collective system, as applied, to maintain the principles of the Covenant of the League of Nations and the Kellogg Pact. This failure, while for the moment increasing alarm at the prospect of general war, need not be a major disaster. The statesmen of the world are now taking stock of their efforts in the light of sixteen years' experience. Such a reconsideration of the situation in which the League of Nations finds itself is not a sign of weakness, on the contrary it is called for by the vitality of the idea of collective security and the overwhelming desire of the people for peace.

The League of Nations Association affirms its conviction that the League of Nations must be made more effective and this can be done by the application of the following principles

(1) Acceptance of the Kellogg Pact as the fundamental guiding principle of a universal league ,

(2) establishment within the orbit of this universal league of arrangements for peaceful modification of the *status quo* and for the advancement of social and economic justice ,

(3) gradation of obligations for maintaining collective security in accordance with the geographical position and special situation of states ,

(4) separation of the Covenant of the League of Nations from the Treaty of Versailles

The period through which the world community is passing might be compared to what is called the "critical period" in American history under the Articles of Confederation, when the American union needed to be examined and strengthened. In the last sixteen years the structure of peace has been subjected to similar strains. The need for this structure remains as valid as when it was first planned. The only alternative to an effective organisation of the world community is the war system. The task confronting us is not changed, only clarified and made more urgent.

Released on May 11, 1936

I was not able to discover exactly what was meant by Article 3. There always appeared to be absolute agreement that without collective justice there could be no collective security, and that sanctions must, to be effective, lead to war. I think it was generally felt that the League and its Covenant was very much a League of Victors who had consciously or unconsciously used the League to keep things as they are. That is the meaning of Article 4.

There was considerable difficulty in fixing my meeting

with President Roosevelt Sir Ronald Lindsay, the British Ambassador, succeeded however in arranging an interview just before we left for England. It took place at the White House and I was accompanied by Sir Ronald. This interview was private, so I have no intention of trying to give anything like a report of what far more was a very interesting talk with a very charming, well informed statesman. I say charming because the President is all that word means. He has, however, a very determined if not a much harder side to his character and this blazed out as he spoke of treaty-breakers and the persecution of people for racial, religious, or cultural reasons. There is nothing which I could report about this conversation which has not been said in public speeches by the President himself. He is a keen believer in democracy, has not the slightest sympathy with Bolshevism or Fascism, is of opinion that peace can only be maintained when statesmen are willing to keep their bond and honour their signatures. I think he would have been more impressed if I had been able to lay before him a scheme for international economic co-operation. He understands, as he has often said, the final and complete futility of war. If he takes any lead in the near future it will be to bring all nations together in order to discuss how peacefully to remove the causes which may lead to war. His latest speeches bear witness to his hatred of the present invasion of China. But these speeches do not mean armed intervention. I do not think the American nation will allow itself to be forced into a war for any supposed altruistic cause. American interests come first, as British interests come first with our Government. So far as I could gather there is no enthu-

siastm anywhere in the United States for a League of Nations which exists to exercise collective force against those who offend its decisions or outrage such international law as may be said to exist

The one thing certain in my mind after listening to President Roosevelt is this he has a great admiration for Great Britain but his first love is the United States Like everyone else who thinks, he quite understands that however much America may desire to keep out of old world entanglements, nations are so tied up in financial, trading, and cultural relationships that in spite of unwillingness to be drawn in, circumstances may be too strong for them Therefore when I urged as an alternative the calling of a new economic world conference, he was not able to say yes outright, but like other statesmen spoke of the need for preparation My whole object was to try and persuade him, as the one statesman standing above European quarrels, to give a lead to the world Although he has not done so in the manner I hoped, he has again and again spoken for peace and urged discussion and the removal of the causes of war

Mr Cordell Hull, the Secretary of State, seemed to me to have a wiser outlook on all international questions than many others I have met His slogan ' Nations must trade or fight ' is so true and commonsensical that I marvel other statesmen in all lands do not rally round him and insist that all obstacles shall be removed Again and again, publicly and privately, I urged the President to invite Herr Hitler, Signor Mussolini, Joseph Stalin, Monsieur Chautemps, Neville Chamberlain, representatives of Japan and China, to go to the Azores, without

experts or pressmen, and to gather round a table with Cordell Hull as Secretary, to face the world's problem of war or peace. If President Roosevelt were president of such a conference, as of course he would be, I am certain a real effort would be made to lead the world away from the war to the peace spirit. I have not seen Monsieur Stalin since 1926: I am, however, as sure as I was then that neither he nor any other Soviet statesman desires war, and will do everything in his power to prevent one from breaking out. Russia has everything to gain from peace and nothing at all from war. So also have Germany and Italy. I look beyond the Governments to the ordinary people, and though it is not possible for me to do other than detest persecution, imprisonments, and executions in any land, or to think with anything but horror and detestation of such conditions, it is impossible for me to forget that democracies did line up with the persecuting Russian autocracy in the last war. If they could do that they can now, for the sake of peace, find some way of living beside Fascist Governments. As I listened in Washington to the President and his Secretary of State, I became more and more convinced that if the men I have mentioned were brought face to face a start would be made. (I have given the names of men who are at this moment heads of states; while in America I suggested others who were then holding some of these positions.) I do not wish to flatter either Mr. Roosevelt or Mr. Cordell Hull or to appear to think either of them able to work miracles, but having met all the others I most certainly think my proposal is a reasonable and possible one.

I am convinced from all I heard in the States that

America, from North to South, is very, very slowly moving towards economic unity in spite of the many different forms of government. If President Roosevelt and his Secretary of State think American economic unity is possible, why should we despair of doing the same thing in Asia, Europe, and Africa? There is a breadth of view about American statesmen and a realism which enables them to see facts and understand that difficulties are made to be overcome. During a discussion with me the other day, a well-known American told me that many people in America were sick to death of the self-righteousness of some and the downright quarrelsomeness of others in Europe. He said Nero fiddling while Rome was burning was nothing compared with the talking and boasting for and against each other which we in Europe indulge in. His view, which is very widely held in America, is that Britain, France, Germany, and Italy must unite to find a settlement of their own difficulties, not at all to the exclusion of Russia or others, but as a first step towards bringing peace to Europe.

As I listen to these friends and remember all that was said to me in the States, my mind refuses to allow me to regard war as in any way inevitable even though the clouds are black and heavy enough to make one almost despair. If the people of America could bestir themselves and see their nation as one portion of the whole world, giving their President authority and power to make a big gesture to the world, such as the summoning of the men I have mentioned to meet him, who can say what the end might be? Nations governed in many diverse manners and, with varying degrees of culture

united to destroy Germany, America, France, Japan, Italy, China, ourselves and Czarist Russia were all on one side in the Great War. American and other statesmen know how difficult a job it was to organise all the conflicting interests into a harmonious whole in order to defeat Germany. Everyone in America with whom I spoke acknowledged this and declared it could not be anything like so difficult to organise a conference for peace. My experience in America, in discussion with all sorts of people—senators, congressmen, governors, and mayors, as well as the President, convinces me that each and all quite understand that there is no possible chance that at any period we can think of mankind will allow itself to be divided into two competing political theories of government. It is a fact that incidents take place almost daily which formerly would have led to war and which are now settled by verbal and written apologies, so convinced is everybody that a great universal war would destroy them all.

I met the late Mr Kellogg at St Paul. He asked to be allowed to call and see me, and we had tea together. He was very tired, weary, and disappointed that his "Pact" had not preserved peace. He did not imagine peace could ever come from brute force, and during our long conversation he again and again repeated his conviction that the world must end war or war would end civilisation. He, as others, agreed that a great new effort should be made to deal with causes, but like others he was distressed and perplexed because of the dictatorships which had arisen in the world. I do not think, bad as he thought things were, he really believed war



would come, and when he rose to leave he warmly grasped my hand, and, treating me as a young man, urged me to carry on because, he concluded, there is no other way to peace but to get those responsible for the world round a table before the war is allowed to break out.

Some years before the war I first met Colonel House, President Wilson's famous adviser, in the home of my friends Joseph and Mary Fels. When he came to London during the war I met him again, and also during the Peace Conference in Paris, and again later in London. He is not an intimate friend as are some other American and foreign statesmen, I think however I may claim him as a friend. So when in New York I made it my duty and pleasure to meet him. We spent a profitable and friendly hour together, discussing the past and the future. Although he is about my age time has not been quite so kind to him physically as it has been to me, but mentally he seemed as vigorous, alert, and well informed as ever. There was a shade of disappointment in his voice when we talked of the League of Nations and Abyssinia and China, and what was likely to happen in Spain and Europe generally. The same hatred of dictatorships and persecutions as elsewhere. I think, however, his mind has brought him a long, long way along the road which will ultimately land him, if he lives, on the side of those who believe in world economic co-operation as the only alternative to war.

There is not much more to be said about these conversations, except that I count this American trip as one of the most interesting and instructive episodes in my not unadventurous life. How can I sum it up? Just not at

all I will leave that to another pen, that of Mr E C H. Kirschten in the *Christian Science Monitor*, who I think best expressed the average opinion

"One of the greatest personal contributions to the cause of peace in the United States in the last few years undoubtedly has been made by Mr. George Lansbury, patriarch of Britain's Labour Party, on his recent tour of the United States in behalf of the Emergency Peace Campaign

"A vigorous idealist, it is hard to over estimate the effect of his personality on American audiences. Here was a veteran of hundreds of parliamentary battles, untouched by the least cynicism. Here was a man, past his three score years and ten, who still dared to profess high ideals in high places, and—what is more—dared to hope they will prevail. Lansbury's humanitarianism, growing out of a sincere religious conviction that he was proud to profess, opened more than one American eye. For many well intentioned persons it was a revelation to bear this old campaigner make as potent a weapon of a scriptural text as of statistics on the waste of war and the futility of conquest. His figures only proved for him and his audiences that 'those who take up the sword, perish by the sword'

"In a world that is taking up the sword on every hand, Mr Lansbury is still the supreme optimist. He sees a way that leads from the brink on the edge of which the nations totter. He would have the United States and Great Britain form a new League of Nations. He would have them realistic enough to see the uselessness and the horror of war, and he would have them display the courage to renounce the idea that it is inevitable.

"'New League' is more than a phrase with this hard headed Labourite. He would have Geneva abandon

its coercive covenant. Instead of invoking sanctions, he would have the League devote its effort to the elimination of the causes of war. Tolerance, a frank discussion of problems and a willingness to make reasonable concessions, he believes will enable the nations to live in peace.

"Nowhere should this theory receive quicker endorsement, Mr. Lansbury feels, than in the 'melting pot' that is the United States. Every race and nation on the globe has contributed its quota to the American population, and all these diverse people live together in an orderly fashion under the laws of the land. That, more than the sentimental notion that the League after all is an American idea, should win our support for its reform, he believes.

"And he feels that American membership in the new league is vital. Without the United States, the new league will be stillborn and Europe will revert to the diplomacy of the balance of power—something worse than the Middle Ages.

"There is no alternative, he is sure. There are but two choices: early reform of the League with American participation, or a repetition of 1914-18. Certainly he is not an alarmist to be talking of war in these days of sabre rattling and fleet building. But, on the other hand, can a realist vision an official American delegation at Geneva in the next few years?

"Even when Woodrow Wilson, the President who conceived the idea of the League, championed it, America did not join. But what if the question were raised again? With both major American parties agreeing that it is a dead issue—or rather, a live coal—would Congress be more likely to vote for American adherence? Has not opposition to the League increased during the post war years? It was not so long ago that William Randolph Hearst and the Coughlin forces

combined to keep the United States out of the World Court True, there is cause to believe that their influence is waning, but what of the American public's disillusionment after Corfu, Manchuria, and Ethiopia?

"Mr Lansbury does not ignore these facts In face of them, he says that he can only hope that there will soon arise an American statesman of sufficient vision and leadership to overcome the obstacles And he is sure that such a League advocate will find a greater will to international co-operation in his own country than in almost any other quarter of the globe

"Granted, even if it is not saying too much for the co operative spirit of the rest of the world, but where is that leader? Mr 'Roosevelt is hardly the man After the World Court experience and the London Naval Conference, we find this Administration embarked on a shipbuilding programme greater than any in history And the Republican presidential candidate seems to offer no more hope, bound by the foreign policy plank in the Republican platform

"One might fall back on the time element for the solution of the problem The ever more apparent need for a League that includes the United States can and will be brought more and more to the attention of the average American But Mr Lansbury himself precludes such a course 'Thus American leader', he says, 'must come soon, or——'

"And if he does not, what will Europe do? Will she only go through the motions of rehabilitating the League? Will she actually march blindly into the worst of all wars What can she do without America?"

## Chapter IV

### PARIS AND BRUSSELS

My visits to Paris and Brussels received scarcely any publicity. I crossed over to Paris on August 19th, 1936, returning on the 21st. On the 20th the French Prime Minister, Leon Blum, gave me an interview. It was a very great pleasure for me to be able to meet my Socialist comrade as Prime Minister of France, even though his position was difficult owing to the fact that he was at the head of a Government which was not purely Socialist but a Coalition. M. Blum has always been very charming and kind both privately and in public, and although in going to him to discuss international affairs he knew I was not representing the Labour Movement or any political party, he was kindness and courtesy itself. I was, however, able to assure him that in asking his support for a world economic conference, I was in fact asking him to support a proposition which had received the support of the Labour and Liberal parties in the House of Commons. On my return to London I sent him a copy of *Hansard* containing the report of the debate which took place in the House of Commons on February 5th, 1936, when I moved the following resolution

" That this House affirms its profound belief in the futility of war, views with grave concern the world-wide preparations for war, and is of opinion that, through the League of Nations, His Majesty's Government should make an immediate effort for the summoning of a new international conference to deal with the economic factors which are responsible, such as the necessity for access to raw materials and to markets and for the migration of peoples, with a view to arriving at an international agreement which will remove from the nations the incentive to pile up armaments and establish the peace of the world on a sure foundation "

Mr Lloyd George, speaking for the Liberals and Mr Lees Smith for the Labour Party supported the proposition, and when the division was called 137 voted for and 228 against

After some discussion of the difficulties the French Prime Minister expressed his general support, though he was careful to say that much preparation would be needed. He was, however, quite emphatic, as all Socialists must be, that economic conditions are the main cause of violence and war in human relationships. Before meeting him I was fairly certain what his views about war and peace would be. I left much more certain that Leon Blum, while determined to uphold the rights of his own people, was equally determined to do everything in his power to keep his country out of war. This determination was not due to fear or cowardice, but solely because he knew, as every thinking person knows, that war is a ghastly futility. His friendship for Great Britain is second only to his love for France. Even so, he is anxious for understanding and peace with Germany and the rest of the world

I am quite certain that could his period of office as Prime Minister have taken place without the horrors of the Spanish war, he could have begun more effective peace talks for all Europe than have yet seemed possible

Since I met him, he has resigned and returned to the Premiership. He still fills a great position in European politics and will, I am sure, always take his rightful part as an international Socialist on behalf of peace. The support still given to him is indeed the outstanding fact in French public life. There is intense hatred of dictatorship and the foreign intervention in Spain, but there is also an overwhelming opinion that the right policy was followed by Leon Blum and his Government in doing everything in their power to prevent that war spreading to the rest of Europe. The people who live in Northern France are not as yet too old to remember what modern warfare meant for them from 1914 to 1918, and they understand quite clearly what another up-to-date war would mean. Consequently, if there is one nation in the whole world that needs and desires peace, it is the French.

I say this in spite of the tremendous piling up of armaments and building of fortifications. These are the effect of bad statesmanship and the folly of those who imposed the terrible penal terms of peace. The dread fear of war which these bloated French armaments on land, sea, and air express is the direct harvest of what was sown during those hectic days in Paris and Versailles when Allied statesmen imagined peace could be secured as well as vengeance. But if the new conference is speedily called, the difficulties ahead and the legacies of the past will soon disappear. There is not sufficient hatred in the world

to cancel out the fraternity and goodwill which form a great part of the make-up of men like Leon Blum. There are many millions in all lands like him: they are waiting for a lead. Perhaps he will find it is he who must take the lead; and I say this because my most lasting impression of this French Socialist is that he is stronger, more certain of what he wishes to do, than most statesmen I have met. He is not the kind of man to be dragged at the heels of any home or foreign statesman; neither is he a man who, for any reason other than what he considered best for France and the world, would deviate one iota from the policy usually associated with Socialism. He knows how hard and difficult a job it is to act simply as a Socialist when administering the affairs of a Capitalist nation; but this does not daunt him as his legislation and State actions as Prime Minister show. He also understands that in all efforts to transform capitalism into Socialism compromise is necessary. He has no faith in violent revolution and is prepared to pay the price which peaceful, constitutional change imposes on those Socialist Governments which are endeavouring to establish Socialism by parliamentary action.

As I understand him, his whole foreign policy would follow the same line. He wishes international co-operation established by consent. He knows this is not possible through war. If it were in his power he would form an economic bridge between Germany and France in order to aid the rest of Europe to recovery. He has no liking for the waste of armaments or war, and I am sure will do whatever is possible to support an alternative policy.

I started out on my mission hoping that first one states-



man, then another, might prove to be the one who would give a clarion call to the world for a peace conference before war could break out. None has as yet responded. Perhaps M. Blum may even yet be moved to sound that call. Every word he spoke during our interview proved how much he desired peace and how convinced he was that the causes of war are mainly economic and can be removed. So why should not the leader of the French Socialists issue a call in stronger terms than did His Majesty King Leopold, urging the peoples of the world to use the present breathing space for the purpose of hammering out the question of how mankind can rid itself of the war danger? Nobody knows the subject better than my friend. I trust he may soon be right in the midst of all nations urging them to throw down their arms and enter upon the pathway of goodwill and co-operation.

On my way home I realised what a tremendous task this quest for peace upon which I had embarked was going to be. In some ways I felt like the Greek in the myth who tried to roll a heavy stone uphill which continually rolled down again. This mood, however, soon passed, and within a few days after reaching London I found myself, on the invitation of my friends, on the way to Brussels. This was on September 4th, and it was proposed that I should attend the International Peace Congress as a delegate. This Congress was organised by Lord Cecil and was called to discuss and adopt four propositions to which no amendment would be allowed. I am now of opinion that we should have followed the example set by the Peace Pledge Union and withdrawn our delegation. But though it was held under conditions which out and

out pacifists could not accept, it was a splendid international demonstration on behalf of peace. It was one of the most cosmopolitan gatherings held. But I am convinced that just as oil and vinegar will not mix, so it is impossible to mix the policy of collective security through massed force with the pacifism which says "never again" and means it. I am prepared in social and industrial life to support any measures which have for their object the amelioration of conditions of life for my fellow citizens. I cannot, however, consent to do this if it means that I must give up my advocacy of what is the true remedy for social ills—which is to apply the principle "Do to others as you would they should do to you." This means the social ownership, organisation, and control of land and industry for the service of all. In the sphere of international affairs I apply the same sort of test. I would support palliatives, but cannot give up my advocacy of principles.

I asked Leon Blum and others with whom I talked to hear my belief about war and its evil futility, but I also asked for support on behalf of some measures to be taken now at least to start the world along the road towards removing the causes of war. My view is that nations will not commence to discuss these first conditions of peace if they continue to fill their minds with the futile folly of imagining that peace can be created through the use of massed violence. Consequently, when I found myself on the way to Brussels I determined to ask my very good friend, Emile Vandervelde, to try and get me an interview with M. Van Zeeland, then the Prime Minister of Belgium. This was arranged for me a day or two later, on

September 7th I had never met M Van Zeeland before and therefore met him as a complete stranger I found that this statesman has such a pleasing manner and speaks our language so perfectly that it is possible to say that this was one of my most understanding discussions

I carried to him the same message that I had carried to the others Perhaps because he has a religious background to his life I think he appreciated my outlook rather more easily than some of the other men I have interviewed There is a bond of unity which no words can express between two people who hold some great faith in common, especially when that faith finds its foundation in what some of us believe is our spiritual existence There was no need to stress the anti Christian character of war or its complete futility

There was with M Van Zeeland the same agreement that I had found with the other statesmen on the question as to whether mankind would ever divide itself into two great sections, Bolshevik and Fascist He too agreed that this was nonsense There is fierce antagonism between these two theories of government, but there is a much greater antagonism to both The strength of those who accept either the Bolshevik or Fascist creed lies in the fact that they each believe with a truly religious fervour that their scheme of life is the one which alone can save the world from disaster I feel the strength of this because a similarly strong conviction possesses me that only by the removal of injustice and the establishment of just and equitable relationships between men and women can peace be established I think M Van Zeeland believes this as strongly as anybody although

he is not a pacifist. He is quite certain that peace is of the utmost urgency and importance for Belgium. It seemed to me that he understood, more clearly than most, that a true League of Nations must be an inclusive one and its objects not penal but constructive.

I left him feeling much more cheerful than after my other interviews. He came down to earth and remained there during our talk, and spoke in clear cut terms. Consequently, when early last year it was announced that he was, on the invitation of the French and British Governments, to undertake an enquiry into world economic conditions and what could be done to deal with the present plight of the world, I read the news with much satisfaction. Neither M. Van Zeeland nor his colleague, M. Frère, are Socialists, and what they propose falls short of what people like myself visualise as necessary. But it is an important episode in our lives that such a mission as he has undertaken should have been considered worth while.

I will conclude this part of my story by printing a letter from King Leopold to M. Van Zeeland, and a telegram which I sent to His Majesty from Copenhagen where I was then staying. The following is the text of the letter of the King of the Belgians.

“When one reflects on the state of disorganisation in which humanity is plunged, a feeling of profound anxiety reveals the future under a very dark light.

‘It is therefore necessary to encourage, vigorously and with conviction, every attempt at organisation, the pursuit of which may lift minds up towards an ideal of human solidarity. Does not this consideration

emphasise the importance of the mission which Great Britain and France have entrusted, through you, to Belgium and which greatly exceeds the limits that are generally attributed to it since it may lead to the quest of the elements of a rational organization of world economy?

"The welcome which you received beyond the Atlantic is an indication of the favourable disposition of the United States of America towards the effort due to the initiative of France and Great Britain. These three great nations thus give us proof of their generous wish to take part actively in the establishment of a better order, which the whole world is demanding.

"The additional work which you have undertaken in accepting this heavy task will arouse the gratitude of all who understand its true aim and appreciate its immense scope.

"At this moment when you are about to set out the preliminary results of your enquiry, allow me to make you a suggestion. It would be assential, I think, to bring about the creation of an organism of economic studies, the value of which would be emphasized by its triple character of universality, permanence, and independence.

"Research into the elements of a universal economic organisation, the continuous adaptation of this organisation to the constantly changing economic factors—such would be the object of the studies of this institution.

"Economic science, which is essentially living, is subject to the rhythm of life, and the problems which it raises cannot receive unalterable solutions.

"Finally, in order to be able to fulfil its mission, the institution contemplated ought also to be as independent as possible of national influences.

"It is incontestably very difficult to isolate the economic domain from political contingencies, but it is precisely this difficulty which is the crux of the

problem with which you are grappling and on which all our efforts must be concentrated

"In these circumstances it would be essential for the proposed institution to be able to rely on the co-operation of those persons all over the world who are best acquainted with all questions relating to industry, trade, agriculture, finance, and labour. These people would lend their assistance by reason of their individual qualifications and not in virtue of a mandate

"Neither the lowering of tariff barriers, nor any partial measure, can alone put an end to the confusion which is threatening peace. If we really wish to avert war and bring mankind back to a more peaceful frame of mind we must have the courage to tackle the economic question in its entirety and to solve the great problems which menacingly confront humanity, distribution of raw materials—distribution of the means of exchange—international distribution of labour—equilibrium between the agricultural and industrial nations

"I cherish no illusions as to the difficulties which the realisation of so vast a programme involves

"Nevertheless, I am convinced that the moment is favourable to attempt it, and that we can hope to find in the fulfilment of this effort not merely the support of all Governments but still more the approval and backing of the great social, religious, and philanthropic bodies—in a word, of all men who have in their hearts the wish for understanding and solidarity

"We cannot conceal from ourselves that whole sections of the human race are no longer in sympathy with each other. If one first step can be taken to bring them together again we shall be offering to humanity, especially to the East—and otherwise than by words—proof that the West values above all immediate considerations of a material nature the spiritual strength which emanates from a genuine feeling of brotherhood"

My own telegram read :

" ALL PEOPLES WELCOME YOUR PROPOSALS. THEY KNOW WARS WILL CEASE WHEN NATIONS ARE WILLING TO SHARE THE WORLD AND RESOURCES WITH EACH OTHER. I CONGRATULATE YOU. GOD GIVE YOU STRENGTH AND CONTINUED COURAGE TO LEAD MANKIND FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT.

GEORGE LANSBURY,  
LONDON."

## *Chapter V*

### SCANDINAVIA

My friend Rudolph Messel, at one time Socialist candidate for Aston, Birmingham, and an early member of the Peace Pledge Union, accompanied me on my journey to Scandinavia during the early days of September, 1936. He is a delightful companion for a person of my age and infirmities. He not only saved me personal exertion and trouble but was extremely helpful in managing press-men who were anxious to know our every movement and seemed almost incapable of being satisfied in their search for news, no matter how often we gave them interviews. I do not mean to imply that we were in any way displeased with the publicity which our mission for peace aroused, but when it comes to repeating and listening to the same propaganda almost hour after hour, the task becomes not only tiring but very boring.

We had a very good journey from Harwich to Esbjerg and thoroughly enjoyed the comfort of the Danish State Railway's passenger steamer. Large comfortable steamers run every day between England and Denmark, and their condition is worth studying by anti Socialists. Many people imagine that State administration means red tape



and rudeness I cannot express just what I think of the staff of these boats, officers, crew, and stewards, who take very great trouble. Everyone has learnt at least sufficient of our language and ways of living in order to make strangers feel comfortable. The mere organisation of international travelling has a clear moral for us when we are considering the wider problems of international peace. People divided by national and political hatreds are continually travelling together across the ocean, through the air, and overland, crossing many frontiers, passing through the hands of Customs officials owned and controlled by a variety of Governments, a ticket bought in Berlin, Moscow, Rome, New York, London, or Paris enables the holder to travel through any country he wishes. The international organisation which makes this possible demands great patience, skill, and collaboration in determining train schedules, fares, and the amount each Government or company shall collect as its due. Yet travelling is so organised and mainly by the exercise of common sense, and few of us give a thought to how it is done. The energy and brain which have gone into this organisation are those of ordinary men. What is done here could be done on a larger scale by more persons. The existing travel agencies are a proof that the organisation of international peace is possible. Only the will is lacking and that can be provided if we are sufficiently determined.

In Denmark every traveller finds a nation which has gone a great deal further upon the road to co-operation than many more famous states. The Government has for years now been a Socialist Liberal coalition, headed by Mr. Stauning, one of the few famous figures of pre-war

**Socialism** In person he reminds one of the portraits of the great men of the age of Marx and Engels, Jaures and Liebknecht. Though he is not tall, he is very firmly set and square, with a decisive look behind his glasses, and a splendid white beard. The movement he leads has been steadily and peacefully expanding its power for fifty years. Town after town has been captured at the elections, and with the spread of Socialist influence the condition of the people has grown better and better. Everyone has heard of the Danish co-operative farming organisations—that is, everyone who has ever bought bacon, butter, eggs, or cheese. Denmark is not Socialist yet by any means, but the wolf of competition who is at everybody's door seems here to have been driven a little farther away, and the result in the calm and happy look of the people, especially the children, is clear to everybody.

Very little money is spent on war preparations. It would in any case be absurd for Denmark to arm against her enormously powerful southern neighbour. She has moreover no empire to hold by force, or to excite the covetousness of other countries. Iceland has the same king, but is in no other way dependent on Denmark. The Danish West Indies were sold to America early this century. The sole trace of the imperialist habits of the early Danes is the Danish flag that flies over the inhospitable rocks of Greenland.

The country is not out and out pacifist by any means. Conscription is still the law and there is a small "coast defence" which is hardly a real navy. But the policy of Denmark ever since the war has been to support earnestly

every move which seemed to help peace Nobody who considers the Danes' record can deny that their efforts have been genuine and continuous

During our stay in Copenhagen we received a very great deal of courtesy from official and non-official people The Trade Union leaders, though in disagreement with my pacifist principles, were extremely kind and spent a considerable amount of time showing me over their splendid offices and explaining the working of the various organisations which make up a very solid, united Labour front Although not pacifists, these friends quite agreed with me that the root cause of war is economic, and were whole heartedly in favour of a new world conference, though, like many others, they did not possess my faith that all governments would loyally join in Among others who spent a good deal of time with us was a leading school master who had visited London during my term of office as First Commissioner of Works He came to London to see what I was trying to do for children in the Royal parks, and I was able to help him investigate the great services to children performed by the London County Council and borough councils, as well as by the Office of Works He had returned to Copenhagen an agitator, determined that the Copenhagen authorities should do even more for Danish children, and on hearing of my arrival called at my hotel to offer to help in my peace campaign, but more urgently to show me what a worthy pupil he had proved himself to be He drove me and my friend Messel across the length and breadth of the city, showing us paddling pools, sandpits, swings, and other amusements which children so much enjoy In an

ingenious manner small pieces of waste land, as well as public parks and open spaces, had been utilised for the benefit of children. I found myself almost forgetting my real reason for being in Copenhagen as I stood in a sandpit or alongside a paddling pool, trying to talk to children who had been told by my friend that I was from Poplar and that they owned their new-found joys to what he had seen there. Poplar seemed to me a very big place as I listened to my friend. I was indeed grateful to him for his remembrance and for all he had done and was yet to do for the children of Copenhagen.

This afternoon gave me some of that pleasure which helps to make serious work more possible, as did the courtesy of the Senior Mayor of Copenhagen who invited me to meet him in his rooms at the Town Hall. Often official people disappoint me, but these Danish people are so sincere and truly democratic that they meet you on an equal and friendly footing without the slightest tinge of pomposity. So as this big Mayor clasped my hand in his much bigger one I felt I was meeting a friend. He gave me a welcome as hearty as any I received anywhere, and most cheering of all, he expressed his entire agreement with me in my determined attitude against war. He made me feel that my journeys have not been in vain. He was quite certain that Denmark could only prosper through peace and agreed that the last war had settled no problems and that only reason and goodwill could save the world from ruin.

Later I interviewed the Prime Minister, Mr. T. A. Stauning, of whom I have spoken already. He was most cordial. He is a keen advocate of the League of Nations

and I found him very noncommittal about any reorganisation of the League, though he expressed himself as certain that some changes would have to be made in its constitution. Like all other Labour and Liberal statesmen I have met, he was keen to hear about the British Labour movement and its prospects. He listened with obvious interest to my proposal for a world conference and intimated that he was certainly in favour of such a conference being called if proper preparations were made for it. He was, however, most anxious that I should see his Foreign Secretary, Dr Munch, who, he said, would make the position of Denmark quite clear to me. I saw Dr Munch the next day. He speaks English fluently and our interview was therefore one of the most helpful on this particular tour. I heard from him of the efforts which the Scandinavian nations are making to establish as big a measure of economic unity among themselves as possible and, through what are known as the Oslo agreements, they hoped to enlist the smaller nations of Europe in an earnest endeavour to persuade the authorities at Geneva to take in hand the question of creating better conditions of life through the development of trade and industry. I gained the impression that Dr Munch and the friends in authority in other countries with whom he had been in contact on this question were fully aware that free trade on the old competitive lines would not be sufficient, and as we discussed currency and general financial difficulties connected with foreign exchange, colonies and raw materials, it was quite evident that he realised that each country must find the fulfilment of their nationalist aspirations in co-operation with others.

In these talks it was easy to understand how much both opinion and action are swayed in smaller nations by Britain and America. There is a strong opinion that these two great and wealthy nations need to be reminded that their well being also depends upon the well being of the smaller powers, and that it is for them not merely to consider world economic and financial problems from the point of view of British or American imperial interests but from the world point of view. Dr Munch seemed to me to appreciate not only the difficulties but also the possibilities of a real move forward. He explained to me something of the working of the Oslo Agreement which, on the initiative of Mr Sandler, the Swedish Foreign Secretary, was signed during 1930 by representatives of Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Holland, Belgium, and Luxemburg. Finland joined in 1935. The object of this agreement is to establish free trade between the signatory nations and to join together at Geneva and elsewhere to clear away all artificial barriers which cripple industry and hinder trade. Some progress has been made at Geneva through discussions which have taken place on the Economic Committee of the League of Nations, certain well written reports have been published, but so far little real progress has been made. There has been much coming and going between representatives of the Scandinavian countries, Great Britain, Belgium, and Holland, but much more than discussion will need to eventuate if trade in Europe is to recover. The Economic Committee of the League of Nations will have to shake itself completely free from the powerful influence of the bigger Powers and realise that these smaller nations

must be considered not as inferiors or pawns but as partners. A few months after my visit, that is in February, 1937, Mr Sandler was in Brussels with King Gustavus, and while there delivered a speech reported in *The Times* newspaper on February 2nd, 1937, as follows

"All around them under the extreme pressure of the crisis, world economy has been following desperate paths, Mr Sandler continued, but to-day hope had emerged and there was a chance of making new progress in the task they had undertaken. The Swedes were ready to take part in any practical discussion on this subject. Belgium and Sweden were linked to great markets, and the time seemed to have come for them to prepare, in the framework of the Oslo Convention, to combine to reduce or remove those obstacles which stood in the way of international trade and made their commercial relations with these great markets difficult. He was optimistic about such collaboration. Through the many points of contact between their two countries it could show itself tangibly.

"In Sweden as in Belgium there had been movements in favour of an independent policy, but both countries had realised the necessity of co-operation on the international plane. A better future depended on the co-operation of all countries and not on the formation of hostile blocs. The smaller democratic countries should seek to concentrate their policy, while remaining true to the spirit of the League of Nations."

From this statement it will be seen how seriously the economic situation is looked upon by the smaller Powers, and how little they trust the bigger Powers to help them. Dr Munch made no secret of his attitude. He was quite

certain that the world must unite to secure better economic and social life through co-operative action.

I was told more than once in these conversations, that Danes believe in the development of individual men and women. So far as their organisation has gone, it has not gone in the direction of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. The Danes do not submit to the rule of the machine: for them science and invention must be used as the servants and not as masters. These Danes are freer in behaviour, more individual and more gay and "Continental" than any other nation perhaps except the French, and they have been able to combine this with the fact that so much of their industrial and agricultural life is organised, supervised, or controlled by the State and Municipalities.

I definitely felt my interviews in Copenhagen were helpful for the object which I have in view—which is the preservation of national life and initiative of all peoples, which in turn will find its complete expression in international co-operation, in sharing the world's resources and markets in the service of each for all and all for each.

I attended some gatherings organised by pacifists and which included some who were not "out-and-out" pacifists. I learned that in Denmark those who object to serve their term in the army, which is compulsory for men of a certain age, are allowed, under certain conditions, to secure alternative service, either on the land, in private employment, or State works. It is not an altogether satisfactory arrangement; it is, however, a great advance on the only alternative allowed in most countries that



enforce conscription—imprisonment Although Denmark is one of the freest countries in the world, I think that we who live in Britain at present have an easier task in testifying our faith than anywhere else That is all the more reason why we should honour those who in less favourable circumstances are courageous enough to keep the flag of "No more war" flying

After three days in Copenhagen we went on to Norway, travelling by night We arrived at Oslo in the morning tired and hungry, and were met by a group of officials, pressmen, photographers, and friends of many different organisations It is impossible to mention names when everyone we met was so generous and kind, and our welcome to this beautiful city was intensely cordial and hospitable Perhaps it was because we were so tired that this welcome was so much appreciated, but whatever it was I felt overwhelmed Arrangements for reception and interviews had been made by some of the leading men in politics and at the University, there were among them members of the Society of Friends, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and the League of Nations Union

Although there is a very determined use of State and local administration for the organisation of social and other services, the Norwegians, like the other Northern people, seemed to be a strongly individualistic race Our guide and friend in Oslo was Dr Wilhelm Keilhau, and without his help it would have taken weeks to do and see all that we did in the few days we could give Dr Keilhau arranged a small dinner party of representative Ministers, among whom was the Foreign Secretary We discussed world problems at length, and it was a great joy for me to

find how much we were in agreement. This Foreign Secretary was impatient of the propaganda which seeks to divide mankind into warring sections of Bolsheviks and Fascists. His Government understands, as indeed do all men and women who are able to reason, that it is only foolish camouflage to try and make people forget that wars are caused not because of political ideologies but because mankind does not as yet know how to use the territories and resources of the world for the service of each other. I was very glad to hear this emphasised over and over again, and to be told that Norway would do its utmost in co-operation with whoever will co-operate with her, to keep these economic questions in the forefront of the discussions at Geneva. There seemed, too, to be more real agreement and much less hesitancy in supporting my proposal for a new world conference to discuss the causes of war in other countries. No one minimised the difficulties, but it was agreed that the United States and Great Britain should give the lead. The Foreign Secretary was quite definite that Norway desired peace and did not in any way believe that war could settle anything.

I met the delegates who represent Norway at Geneva. I cannot do more than try and summarise what they said in the broadest way. They agreed that a League was necessary, that the international Labour Office and other departments had done splendid service in relation to the Drug traffic, White Slave trade, and other services for the benefit of all nations. They still were attracted by President Wilson's plan of "collective security", but were quite uncertain whether or how it could be worked in view of

the fact that it had failed to stop the Spanish, Abyssinian, and Chinese wars I met one man, not a member of the Government, who was extremely hostile to the Great Powers. He regarded them as Powers which acted only in their own selfish interests and declared that in his judgment the present League when dealing with disarmament or world economic problems always found itself confronted with five or six Great Powers, any one or two of which could and would block any scheme for world peace if they considered such a scheme would entail sacrifice, however small, on their part. Another outspoken friend likened the meetings at Geneva to a "thieves' kitchen." I am not going to endorse any of these strictures, but I can say that I am of opinion, from all I have heard and seen, that the initial trouble is the fact that the Covenant is tied up with the Treaties imposed on the defeated nations in the Great War, and the inability or refusal of statesmen to understand that armaments and war can only be abolished when nations agree to substitute discussion and reason for brute force as means of settling the disputes and grievances which in the judgment of these same statesmen cause nations to arm.

I concluded my visit to Norway with a very interesting and instructive interview with the Prime Minister, Mr. Johan Nygaardsvold. He is a good Socialist and his Government is a Coalition Government. He was whole-heartedly in favour of peace and a strong supporter of the policy embodied in the Oslo Agreements. Like the others he was disappointed at the slow progress and was of opinion that the Great Powers act too selfishly both at the League meetings and outside. I was very glad to find how com-

pletely he refused to believe that war was inevitable or that the workers should be divided into warring camps. He was extremely kind and generous in his appreciation of what I was trying to do. Though he is not a pacifist, he considered that everybody should unite in an effort to deal with the economic plight of the world and every statesman should start by accepting the principle of international co-operation.

After a day spent high up above the town amid pine forests we left for Sweden. We reached Stockholm on the Monday and were met by Miss Greta Stendhall who was responsible for an efficient programme. Pressmen and photographers were present in the usual numbers. As the days passed in these countries my spirits rose; I felt I was among sane people, even though they had the unpleasant task of helping to administer an insane kind of world. So when our guide led us across the road to our hotel, all the weariness which another night in the train had left with me faded away, and Messel and I settled down to a good breakfast of coffee and rolls. We were hardly through our meal when one of the most capable persons we had met on the trip arrived. He was a fairly young man named Herman Stolpe and leader of the Peace Movement in Sweden. He is also Chief Education Officer for the Swedish Co-operative movement. He started us off on a round of perpetual motion, showing us all there was to be seen of that beautiful city. He organised a large Press conference and secured the use of the wireless in three countries for a broadcast.

Stockholm must be one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Its centre is a small island which is the Old

Town and covers a much smaller area than the borough of Poplar. North and south it is connected by bridges with the mainland and with other islands. The long firth on which the city is built is dotted with hundreds of islands, covered with pines and grey rocks. Steamers going ceaselessly to and fro take the place of our Underground. The water is blue and generally still. Dark forests come down to the edge.

The city itself has beautiful buildings of every age. The huge red Town Hall with its tall tower is one of the most famous modern buildings in the world. The knight's Church on one of the oldest inhabited islands is very old, and its walls are hung with the shields of noble families going right back to the Middle Ages. But what every visitor to Stockholm notices is not new or old architecture, but the enormous dominance of the "Co-op" Production and distribution of almost everything, from electric lamps to education, is undertaken by the Co-operatives. Their great corn mills and electric lamp factory are among the most noticeable buildings on the outskirts of Stockholm. The influence in keeping prices down is immense, and they are directed by people who are, financially, as clever as any of their capitalist rivals.

Herman Stolpe organised a pleasant luncheon party in one of the co-operative restaurants, a restaurant which hangs like the saloon of a ship across a road, suspended, as it were, from one building to another. It was a gathering of peacemakers of all sorts, not all pacifists, but all very keen and active workers in their own way for peace. A few of us made speeches and I am sure from all that was said that those who believed in collective

security agreed with me that such security can only be possible through the establishment of collective justice. My proposal for a new world economic conference found whole-hearted support and it was unanimously agreed that what the world needed was wisdom and common sense such as would enable it to understand how to share abundance. This is now becoming common talk all over the world, and is an encouraging sign, because it means that the ills of the world are being rightly diagnosed. This is the first step towards finding a cure.

Later we attended a meeting held in a church in the small town of Södertälje, about an hour's railway journey from Stockholm. This was a gathering of out-and-out Christian pacifists. They have no doubts. They take their stand on the words of the Gospel, just as Tolstoi did. They gave me an extremely cordial reception, but I do not think they were impressed by me or my proposals for economic change. They did not seem to be much concerned with how we should apply our principles to modern life. Such people are, however, the driving force of a movement such as the one to which I and my friends belong. They see clearly their goal and allow no difficulty to discourage or stay them in their efforts to reach it.

We had arrived in Stockholm the morning after the General Election, an election which placed my friend Per Albin Hansson in office as Prime Minister of a Coalition Government. He very kindly came to my hotel with two of his colleagues for an interview. He did not need to be told my views or details of my object in coming to Stockholm. It was unfortunate that his Foreign Minister, Herr R. J. Sandler, was away in Geneva, as I would have

liked to discuss matters with them together ; but our talk, nevertheless, covered a large range of subjects. There is no doubt in my mind that Fascism is regarded as a real danger by many Scandinavian people, more so in Sweden than anywhere else. It causes her statesmen to cling very strongly to the League of Nations and collective security. I find myself almost nonplussed when I listen to those who pin their faith to what to me is an illusion. It must be remembered that the Scandinavian nations are in a very difficult position, being small and with powerful neighbours, one of which is the biggest Fascist state in the world. In such a position the " Fascist menace " must seem enormous.

We had a very friendly discussion, and it is possible to say that he agreed that a new world economic conference must be held and that the one essential means of ensuring peace is at least to make an effort to remove the causes of war. He agreed that these were economic, financial and territorial.

I was impressed during my talks with Socialists and Labour men to find how great a respect they have for the British Labour movement. I am not surprised at all to find in what respect and high regard they hold the late Arthur Henderson and his long years of work for peace. The Party, apart from him, is respected for its increasing power and its willingness to aid all those who are in difficulty in lands outside its own borders. Our Swedish friends, just as the British Labour Party, desire the continuance of the League of Nations and pin their faith to collective security ; but there is a general opinion, as was also expressed in Oslo, that drastic reforms are

needed and that the nations outside the League must be brought in. It is not considered right that the League should remain as it is now, largely dominated by the victors of the Great War.

I found the people with whom I talked in Stockholm, this capital of a nation which has descended from the war like Vikings, completely convinced that killing one's fellow men is a nonsensical method of trying to settle anything, and that they are determined to use their courageous and adventurous spirit in striving to discover how to help themselves and mankind to live at peace, finding the joy of living in producing and sharing what ever nature has to give with the peoples of all lands. There is among these Northerners, those in Norway and Denmark as well as in Sweden, a great faith in the right of each to enjoy individual freedom. They know that the complexity of modern life makes this difficult, but in spite of this there seems to me to be among them the spiritual meaning of the words "The strongest man is he who stands most alone", and although they believe in the rule of the majority, they have little use for that kind of machine-made, corrupt majority which Ibsen described as "The Damned Compact Liberal Majority". For them majority rule means the rule of intelligence and not of a party or class machine.

Thinking backwards, my impression of this visit confirms me in my conviction that the British people and the people of America have a great, indeed, tremendous responsibility on their shoulders in this critical moment in the history of mankind. A joint word from Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Chamberlain would bring together a



very solid economic block of large and small nations who would gladly follow a lead to sweep away all trade barriers and start the world along the line of collective peace through the establishment of co-operative sharing. I am assured of this because the smaller nations of the world realise that they cannot stand alone. They desire to be linked together with neighbours both powerful and weak, in an endeavour to bridge the gap which the march of science and invention has created between the present time and the future upon which we are entering. The masses are not by any means dumb—they are fumbling for power in some places, in others they have secured it. Those who represent Labour turn to us and to the United States and ask us not for war, collective or otherwise, but for peace—a peace secured by reason and common sense. It was indeed an education for me to meet these Socialist, Labour, and Liberal state-men who are full of one ambition and desire—that they may be able to leave office knowing they have assisted to lead the world away from the danger of war along the road to peace. Not the peace which means stagnation, but the peace which will give life and life more abundantly.

I have said that these Governments believe in and support the League of Nations. But it is also true that they are growing tired and somewhat disillusioned about the present construction and activities of the League. They are becoming less sure that collective security is either desirable or possible. They want an all inclusive League of Nations. It is these small nations who will, I am sure, unite to secure a much wider, more comprehensive League than any that has been envisaged by

statesmen who belong to the nations who were victors in the last war Herr Sandler, in a speech made during the debate on the King's Speech in the Swedish Parliament on January 17th, is reported as follows

"The League of Nations had passed through three phases, the last of which ended with the great "sanctions" experiment, which, as everybody knew, had failed

"Since then there had remained a certain shapelessness in Swedish relations with Italy, which was the result of Sweden's membership of the League. It was the Government's opinion that these relations should be regulated not by independent Swedish action, but by joint action on the part of all countries which were in the same position. He sincerely hoped that no important member of the League would put forward any difficulties in the way of the continued membership of Sweden and other states

"It was in Sweden's interest (Herr Sandler went on), to work against any tendency to alliances

"We shall not turn to one or the other state (he said), but we shall continue our independent policy. The saying 'Democracy against Dictatorship' is unsound. I do not believe in a preordained war between these two systems. One only increases the danger by maintaining such an idea. I have little respect for the heroism which finds expression in the saying that we must fight to the last Englishman."

## *Chapter VI*

### BERLIN

BEFORE discussing my visit to Germany I would like to recall some incidents connected with the visit of enquiry in which I took part in 1904. I was then serving as a member of the Royal Commission appointed by Mr Arthur Balfour, afterwards Lord Balfour, to investigate and report on questions connected with Poor Law and unemployment. Four of us were chosen by our colleagues to go to France, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, and Germany. We spent most of our time in Germany and devoted seven days to Hamburg, where we decided we should learn most of what there was to know about German social legislation. We were given considerable help by the State and municipal officials, trade union officials and organisers, and social workers, and no effort was spared to enable us to understand the working of their schemes. We were very favourably impressed with all we saw of national and municipal schemes for dealing with casual labour and poverty in general. The social service system, whether dealing with education, personal and public health, housing, unemployment, casual labour, old age, widows and orphans, was designed to prevent ignorance,

sickness, and all other social ills, and it was administered largely, though not entirely, by paid officials

In Germany the officials refused to admit that anybody was destitute and the words "destitution test" never came into our discussions. The system was designed to prevent people becoming destitute. The organisation of dock labour, the provision of housing, the "calling-on" stands and shelters round the docks, were excellent. I do not think these latter have even yet been improved upon anywhere in the world.

All the social legislation in this country, from the first National Health and Unemployment insurance schemes, establishment of unemployment exchanges, and contributory pension schemes, has to a very large extent been based on the German schemes. As a nation we have never been too proud to learn, and quite recently the Minister of Transport and a number of my colleagues in the House of Commons have visited Germany to study road planning and how best to prevent the wholesale slaughter and maiming of civilians which takes place daily on our roads. Such efforts to organise life are much better than studying each other's universal slaughter machinery.

My colleagues and I took every opportunity to walk about the cities we visited unaccompanied, mixing and talking with people in beer gardens and restaurants, and were delighted and charmed at the friendliness with which we were welcomed, and more particularly to find father, mother, and children enjoying music and singing in the open air and the pleasure of the beautiful parks and gardens. Although the police were armed and many

"*verboden*" notices were in evidence, life seemed very care free. The mass of the people, in spite of much ordering of their lives, appeared to get a great deal of enjoyment out of life. My chief recollection of Hamburg is the River Elbe, which makes the city such a splendid port and which gives such a panorama of activity on its waters, from ocean liners to tiny cockle shell boats, all apparently travelling at full speed, jostling and wrestling with the water in successful efforts to avoid each other. There seemed to be life and buoyance such as I had never seen before at any port. Everybody, men and women, boys and girls, appeared to enjoy the rush of it all, and after walking one whole day along the riverside, going in and out of wharves, I remember saying to one of my colleagues that we were looking at a young nation starting out on a voyage of adventure. There seemed to be no fear, they sprang off passenger boats before they were tied up to the landing stage, they seemed, in fact, to be learning how to risk life and limb to win whatever they most desired, and we wondered what the end of this awakening would mean to the world. We talked of the German Emperor and the navy he was determined to build, and a deep and abiding dread of what might be the consequences to the world if Germany, the centuries old ally of Britain, should suddenly find her long unbroken years of friendship destroyed and the two countries should strive to destroy each other. We thought of our common ancestry and the cultural relationship which had grown between the two countries, and especially our stand together for religious freedom and the unity of our working classes. But we were optimistic philosophers.

But while I am speaking of pre war Germany I must mention another imperishable memory We returned to England via Strasbourg and while there saw a sight which it is certain will never be seen again This famous frontier fortress town was being visited by the Kaiser and his son, the Crown Prince The town was full of soldiers and generals Only after a great argument were we allowed to stay in an hotel The Kaiser was reviewing an immenso army with all the pomp and pageantry with which he delighted to surround himself The French inhabitants seemed stunned as they watched for hours these well drilled armed legions steadily marching through their streets I shall never forget how humiliated some of my French friends appeared to be, nor will I forget the remark of one of my colleagues ' God help mankind if this torrent of armaments and men which all nations are now building up is ever let loose on the world "

It was let loose some ten years after this review, as we all know I saw Hamburg, Cologne, and some of the devastated areas immediately after the Armistice of 1918 Hamburg looked like a deserted city It is true that there is now a struggling growing life, but the years since 1914 have brought oceans of tears and sorrow to all lands, and to the Germans it has in addition brought the mental anguish of disillusionment This people has experienced the truth embodied in the words ' what we sow we reap " The German rulers in 1871 laid the trail which produced the events of 1919, when other victors blindly and stupidly imagined they could undo one evil by creating one more intense The sham glory of Emperors has departed, but the sins and follies of

all Governments including our own have left a legacy of misery and suffering throughout Europe which is indescribable. No one who sees at first hand the silent suffering of masses, or who listens to the conversation of people who live amid the nightmare of fear lest the horrors of war break out again, can ever sanction war. We at home are too apt to think that we alone remember war horrors and others forget. This is not so. When the Armistice brought a respite from slaughter, I met scores of French, Swiss, and Germans. No word of hate came from them, only joy and thankfulness that the war was over and a fear that the folly of statesmen and rulers might once again plunge them into war. "That question is behind us. We shall never fight or train our people for revenge", said one leading statesman to me when I asked him on my recent visit if Germany would ever fight again for Alsace and Lorraine. Herr Hitler has publicly and privately made the same statement. I was also told by an official in Berlin that more children and young people visit Germany from France than from any other country. It is certain that if the masses have their way, France and Germany will never fight again. And we will do well to remember that in spite of all that he has said about a strong Germany, Herr Hitler himself has publicly said that the story of Central Europe is one of centuries of mutual slaughter and shifting of boundaries and still Germans and Frenchmen live side by side. "Surely", he went on to say, "the day has come when we must find a way to live at peace." I repeat what I know is true: the German and French masses desire nothing better than peace and co operation.

In 1934 I spent six months in hospital with a fractured thigh. I read during my enforced leisure much European history, including parts of Winston Churchill's *Marlborough*, Dr. Trevelyan's story of Blenheim, and the story of Waterloo. These books told of great battles, much statecraft, and superb heroism, but mainly proved the truth of the German Führer's statement. I wish some writer of history and economics would now tell us what the masses of Europe and the world has gained from all this heroic, mutual slaughter. Nothing has ever been permanently settled. Hatred has been fostered, the deadly crime of vengeance has been glorified, Herr Hitler's declaration, so far as statesmen are concerned, goes unheeded because no one has had courage enough to take him at his word and suggest a meeting to consider a new way of life. I am not forgetting Lord Halifax's visit to Herr Hitler, and other interviews, projected or actual. But these at the time of writing are little more than symbols. Meetings should continually take place until a way out is found.

It is common knowledge that the first German Republic was destroyed because the victorious Allies, drunk with the fear of the consequences which would follow the imposition of their imposed penal peace, were afraid to follow up the disarmament of the defeated peoples by disarming themselves, which, according to their pledged word, they were bound to do. Every effort to discuss disarmament was thwarted by reactionaries who knew it was impossible even to try to maintain the terrible peace terms unless the defeated nations could be kept unarmed, or very slightly armed. A few men, whose



names will never be forgotten, did endeavour to restore some reason and sanity to European life. Arthur Henderson, Aristide Briand, Austen Chamberlain, Stresemann, Brüning, and others worked hard to break down the walls of hate, prejudice, and vengeance, but failed until it was too late to save the people's Government in Germany. Had these men been able to induce the Allied Governments to make the concessions which were accepted almost without a word of protest after the establishment of Herr Hitler's Government, we should not be talking to-day in terms of fear concerning the future of democracy in Europe, because German democracy would have been too strong and friendly to be anything but an example of how a great people, suffering defeat, could rebuild their national life on the foundations of co-operation.

No one will deny that there were other causes which brought about the collapse of German democracy, but no one will say that disunity among the workers and other classes would of themselves have destroyed democracy in Germany. It was the humiliation and economic chaos caused by reparations and trade obstacles which in the end brought National Socialism and Herr Hitler to power. Nothing that has subsequently happened can justify the terrible means by which this power was secured and is apparently maintained. The persecution of the Jewish people simply because they are born of their parents, and of the Christians who refuse to submit to the regulation of religion by Governments, and the complete destruction of all free working class organisation, is something we all deplore and cannot understand. We shall do well, however, to ask ourselves "How comes it that a great

people such as the Germans with centuries of culture behind them accept or acquiesce this form of government?" I feel sure the historian will say they turned, because everyone else had failed, to the man whose policy they thought might lift them out of that despair which foreign domination always brings

My visit to Herr Hitler brought me a shoal of letters from friends and strangers at home and broad. Representative leaders of all religious denominations in the United States, in Europe, and in this country, asked their congregations to say special prayers for the success of my mission, and while I was on my journey, telegrams and letters were being sent to Berlin wishing success. But I also received some letters from Socialist and Labour organisations protesting against my visit, and was officially repudiated by Labour organisations here and in Europe. I believe, though, that those who opposed this visit had not understood that this and all other visits were made solely for the purpose of trying to win support for the proposed new world conference to deal with the economic, territorial, and financial causes of war, and to urge all Governments to accept the pacifist creed and thus honour the Kellogg Pact by outlawing war in deed as well as in words. I left London on Saturday, April 17th, 1936, and arrived in Berlin early on the Sunday morning. I was accompanied by Percy Bartlett and another well known member of the Society of Friends, Corder Catchpole, who was prepared to act as interpreter should it be necessary. It was not necessary, but his knowledge of the situation in Germany, where he had lived for some time, made him an invaluable adviser and help during our three days

in Berlin We were met by representatives of the Government and by the Counsellor to the British Embassy, Sir Ogilvie Forbes Our welcome was cordial and any doubts about getting an interview with Herr Hitler were soon dispelled Pressmen and photographers were present in large numbers, and although the journalists were sceptical about the success of my mission and were very doubtful that the German Government would support my proposal for a world conference, they were all extremely friendly and some were most helpful One or two were quite certain that I would only be allowed to play the role of listener and would be given little opportunity to make my own proposal clear Each reporter wanted an exclusive story and several American and European agencies offered large sums for the exclusive rights of my interview But except for one interview which was published in the *News Chronicle* we decided that whatever I had to say immediately after my discussion with Herr Hitler should be said at a press conference

We spent Sunday morning at the usual service held in the Friends' Meeting House I am unaccustomed to such meetings, though I have once or twice attended at the old Devonshire House in London People who possess no religious faith and cannot accept a spiritual life as true, do not appreciate the value of the absolute quietness which prevails at these gatherings I found myself in a group of people with two companions whom alone of all in that gathering I could speak of as acquaintances or friends But in spite of this I felt we were all one, that we were meeting not to bewail our sorrows but to renew our faith that out of evil good shall surely come Around

us were parents, sisters, and brothers of some who had suffered and were still suffering for their faith, but we were all conscious that hatred availed nothing and only the love which compels forgiveness could give strength and hope for the future. When someone prayed and others spoke for me and to me, I felt a very humble person indeed, especially remembering as I did that in America, Britain, and in other countries, very many similar gatherings were being held. Whatever substance there may be in our reliance on prayer as a means of strengthening our faith in work we are undertaking, the fact that many thousands were thinking of me and praying sincerely for help and guidance to be given me, did most materially help me to overcome the cynicism which some whom I met poured out on me.

I think we left this small gathering refreshed in mind and spirit. I am utterly and completely unable to explain God and eternity, but experiences of this kind, both alone and with others, always leave me much more certain and sure about any piece of work I may be engaged in. I did not know how my mind or body would bear the strain some of those friends were enduring and which many thousands of the Jewish race endure. It is only possible for me, who has never suffered mentally as they are suffering, to bow my head in simple admiration and breathe a prayer that though sorrow does endure many nights, joy shall come in the morning, and breathe a thought which is a prayer that the dawn will soon come.

After this service we went for a drive with Sir Ogilvie Forbes and a friendly German official who had lived in England for years and was well acquainted both with the

past, present, and future policy of Nazi Germany We took our lunch a few miles outside Berlin in a pleasant restaurant inside beautiful grounds It was possible to watch people both during the drive and at lunch, and I cannot say that those in the streets or walking about the park looked much different from those in a London crowd We were in what used to be the most fashionable part of Berlin, though the palaces are now unoccupied and the big houses no longer occupied by a governing class, for the government of Germany has passed into the hands of one who worked as a house painter

Although this revolution has established a form of government which I and most people in Britain heartily dislike, it is not a government by aristocrats or financiers The Nazi salute has taken the place of the old fashioned military salute, and instead of 'Long live the Kaiser,' it is now "Heil Hitler" It is extraordinary how easily the people appear to have settled down and accepted the new order of things It is true that there is a tremendous system of espionage and control, and many people are spied upon and put away because of fake evidence given by personal enemies out of sheer spite When we enquired about this we in turn were asked if we knew of any revolutionary period during which such things did not happen, or whether we could say where freedom of speech and action had been permitted even after a successful revolution

I found little satisfaction in arguing such questions My experience at home and abroad, apart from all theories, has convinced me that I cannot understand how others with the same experience should not agree with me

Experience is a hard taskmaster and I have learnt from it that violence evoked violence, and oppression brings in its trail hatred and bitterness, which in turn is used by the oppressed against their oppressors. My observation of the Germans, talking with a few of them in the streets, convinces me that the mass of people in that country and in Italy tolerate and accept the present form of government *not because of theoretical beliefs, but solely because they believe the home and foreign policy of Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini will enable them to enjoy a better and more peaceful standard of life.* When I discussed the question of an amnesty to celebrate the birthday of the Fuhrer, the reply was that when he came to power he amnestied the whole nation from the horrors of chaos and social ruin into which the failure of the previous government, or want of government, had plunged the nation. I did not try to argue with those who said this mainly because I had come largely to hear what others had to say and also because it is quite impossible in a few minutes' talk to change people's point of view.

On the Monday after our arrival we were up early discussing our plans concerning the press after the interview had taken place, and generally trying to make ourselves believe that we were neither anxious nor nervous. The interview was arranged for one o'clock at the Foreign Office. The only people present were Herr Hitler, Mr Schmidt, the interpreter, a leading Foreign Office official, and myself. The conversation was confined to Herr Hitler, myself, and the interpreter. It was not treated as a public meeting, neither did either of us monopolise the conversation. We each tried to understand the other's

point of view, though I doubt if Herr Hitler fully understood or appreciated the pacifist case any more than I could understand his intense hatred of Bolshevism and the Jewish race. This interview was private. I am, however, permitted to recall statements made by Herr Hitler which in one form or another formed part of our discussion. These statements have since, in many cases, been followed by public action on lines which he foreshadowed to me. In order to safeguard myself from even unwittingly betraying a private conversation, I will print a summary of his views drawn up by another hand, that of Mr P. A. Molteno. It was printed in *The Times* newspaper on May 4th, 1937, soon after my return, and it corresponds in every way with his statements made to me.

"Hitler has recorded that Germany has renounced all intention of seeking a re-acquisition of Alsace-Lorraine. Has solemnly recognized and guaranteed France her frontiers as determined after the Saar plebiscite, and has further declared 'We are prepared to do everything on our part to arrive at a true peace and a real friendship with the French nation.' Has made peace with Poland. Has offered to join in complete disarmament. Has offered to limit her army to 200,000, and when this was abandoned, offered to limit her army to 300,000. This was refused. Has stated her willingness to be ready in principle to conclude pacts of non-aggression with neighbouring States, and to supplement these pacts with all provisions which aim at isolating the war maker and localizing the area of the war.

"That Germany is ready at any time to limit her arms to any degree that is adopted by the other Powers.

"Prepared to take an active part in all efforts which

may lead to a practical limitation of boundless armaments Prepared to agree to the prohibition of the dropping of gas, incendiary, and explosive bombs outside the real battle zone, and stated that this limitation could then be extended to complete international outlawry of all bombing

"Hitler also offered the concrete proposal for an air pact on the basis of parity of strength as between France, England, and Germany

"Prepared to agree to any limitation which leads to the abolition of the heaviest arms especially suited for aggression such as (1) heaviest artillery, (2) heaviest tanks

"Declared Germany's readiness to agree to any limitation whatsoever of the calibre strength of artillery, of battleships, cruisers, torpedo boats, and of the size of warships, the limitation of the tonnage of submarines, or their complete abolition in the case of international agreement

"Prepared to agree to prevent the poisoning of public opinion among the nations by irresponsible elements, orally or in writing, through the theatre or cinema, having already taken steps to this effect in Germany

"Of all these proposals the only one which eventuated in agreement was his offer to limit the German Navy to 35 per cent of the British Navy "

It was never my intention to ask for a general discussion of the past because it is patent to all thinking people that the present Government in Germany would never have come into existence had there been no war and no penal peace imposed And with regard to Colonies, neither the friends with whom I collaborate nor I have suggested a redistribution of Colonies Our proposition is the truly



Socialist one of pooling all non self governing and mandated territories under the protection, control, and organisation of an international committee responsible to a reformed League of Nations, with the over-riding obligation to secure just and equitable treatment of all native populations. This proposal avoids the danger of using Colonies as fortified bases and arming natives for offensive purposes, as is the custom now. I did not ask for an opinion on this proposition, neither did I press for any statement concerning Russia. It was sufficient for me to remember that for months before and since our interview representatives of Russia, France, Germany, Britain, and Italy have sat around a table ostensibly discussing non intervention in Spain. Actually they have been discussing how to prevent the Spanish war drifting into a European war. If it is possible for Russia to meet the representatives of the Fascist States in this way, there seems to be no reason why, when the new world economic conference assembles, Mr. Latvinoff should not be welcomed as a collaborator.

It is continually said that Herr Hitler cannot be trusted. His latest coup in Austria gives justification for the statement, but we shall do well to remember that many Germans think the same about us and other nations. One of the leading British diplomats in Europe said to me during a discussion on the future of mankind: 'Mr. Lansbury, there will be no peace in the world until there is a change of heart in all who try to govern the world, a change that will not allow us to sign documents which we have no intention of honouring. The public is grossly deceived when they see pictures of statesmen solemnly signing pacts, agreements, and treaties, because we diplomats

know that many of the signatures are never intended to be honoured" On another occasion, a public man said, "Statesmen and nations have got everything material, but they have left out God It is His Power, the power of truth and righteousness which in the end will bring down one empire after another."

I am not a diplomat I went to Herr Hitler knowing that were I a German citizen or a Jew I would not be allowed to say even in private the things he patiently listened to from me During the more than two hours we had together, his whole conversation was impersonal and understanding and clear-cut He did not attempt to deny the suppression of Jews and Bolshaviks He claimed to base his speeches and action on what he considered best for Germany, and again and again during our talk he declared that Germany must have peace, that she was arming because other countries were arming You and I can never understand or admit the necessity for persecution and imprisonment of those whom we dislike, our whole conception of human relationships is opposed to a form of government which maintains itself in this way It is, however, true that Herr Hitler and his friends believe they are serving the best interests of the German people by ruling in this way Again and again as I listened to him I imagined myself listening to speeches that I had heard in our House of Commons defending concentration camps in South Africa and the actions of the Black and Tans in Ireland Policies of repression may differ in their form and expression, but in essence they are the same

The main object of my interview was to obtain Herr

Hitler's agreement to my proposal for a new world economic conference. He expressed some doubt as to the success of such a conference, but at the end of our conversation we agreed to the following statement:

"Germany will be very willing to attend a conference and take part in a united effort to establish economic co-operation and mutual understanding between the nations of the world if President Roosevelt or the head of another great country will take the lead in calling such a conference"

He told me, and officials reiterated this on an occasion when I was being shown round a large exhibition building in course of erection—an exhibition designed to show the world the wonderful achievements of the German people in overcoming difficulties through the production of substitutes—that he did not believe Germany could remain self-contained, although a great deal is being done to overcome the economic difficulties with which they are confronted owing to the tremendous armament and military expenditure and lack of raw materials and foreign trade. And in connection with this latter we must not forget that of the chief raw materials needed by all nations for various purposes, the British Empire possesses eighteen and Germany only four. It is easy to say "she can buy what she needs", but this is only actually possible when there is real free trade and exchange, and when currency rates are stable. This is not the case to day, and the claim for colonies is made by Germany to enable her to expand her industry and trade.

I have been asked whether I remembered my imprisoned Socialist, Trade Unionist, Jewish, and pacifist comrades

and friends during my interview I could fairly answer that for many years now a good portion of my time has been spent in doing what is possible for one man to do to help to alleviate and succour those in danger or in prison I did discuss prisons, camps, and executions with Herr Hitler, and since my return have continued to appeal on behalf of groups and individuals The public utterances of Herr Hitler are before the world he said no more on this to me Some prisoners have been released, but so far as I know only a very few But I propose to deal with the question of political prisoners and the persecution of the Jews later on

Many people ask what I thought of Herr Hitler Even an interview lasting two and a half hours does not give anybody a right to form an opinion It is only possible to give an impression If in one word I have to give my impression I would say he is a mixture-dreamer and fanatic His speeches prove he is a strong individualist although he calls himself a "National Socialist" (Many Socialists are like that) I have read reports of speeches in which he has declared that his policy is one which aims at developing the German nation individually and collectively; and in which he has also declared for a Germany united within its own borders and uncontrolled by any outside body The German official who accompanied us round Berlin tried to persuade us that the German Government believed in international co-operation, but not an international organisation of governments or societies giving orders regarding the organisation of life in Germany If this is the attitude of the German Government it is no more or no less the attitude of all governments The

'Soviet Government will claim that their object is to develop each Russian citizen according to his best ability

I think history will record Herr Hitler as one of the great men of our time. He appeared to me to be a man free of personal ambition, not at all ashamed of his humble start in life, simple in his mode of living—in which he is in line with the Soviet Communists and other truly Socialist leaders, his style of dress was such that I did not even notice it, except that he wore what I believe was an iron cross. I am told he has no love of pomp or show, is a total abstainer, non smoker, vegetarian, and lives in the country rather than in a town. He is a bachelor and likes children and old people. I thought he looked rather a solitary man. I wished very much that it was possible to talk to him without an interpreter, or that I could have gone out to Berchtesgaden and stayed with him for a little while. In spite of the past, it seemed to me that he could listen to reason, and I felt strong enough to believe that Christianity in its purest sense might have a chance with him. I remembered Lenin and our hours of argument, at the end of which he did not scoff at me but quietly told me to go home and convert the Christians. That might have been the end of a really long talk with Hitler. It might not have been, and I left him, hoping that the next British or American or French Ambassador might perhaps be able to establish himself as a friend and break down the make believe of diplomacy and try by reason and common sense to bring the German people away from the terrible gospel of racial hatred into the more rational realm of toleration and freedom, and to help them remember that we do not choose the parents

whose memory we love, any more than Hitler, Blum, Eden, and other statesmen chose theirs

Like others in positions of power, he is convinced that he has a mission in life—a mission to raise Germany to a position of equality with all other nations. He hates Bolshevism as many in this country hate it. He appeared to have no hatred for any but the Jewish race, and this, as I have said, baffles my understanding. I have said many cruel, bitter things about capitalism, but I cannot remember ever being more than gently bitter about individuals, and what I find most difficult to understand is his inability to believe that Gentile financiers are as international in their operations as the Jews, and that Gentiles were the majority of those who made money out of the Great War. It was quite beyond me to understand how the man with whom I sat and talked so amicably could really believe a whole race of people is so bad that it should not be allowed to exist. It is incredible and beyond my belief that the German people as a whole should accept this creed of hatred and bitterness. It is so soulless and inhuman. I am certain that if once this great nation can be brought to believe they will get a fair deal with other nations in regard to trade and international relationships, this phase of bitterness will pass. No nation can live on hatred of a small race of people, and no nation has ever prospered for long which persecuted the Jews in modern times. Witness the awful day of reckoning which befell Tzarist Russia in 1917.

Nor do I understand the attitude of mind shown by Nazi Germany, and Herr Hitler in particular, to Christianity. I can understand the attitude adopted towards

pacifism it is the same as that adopted in this country by politicians, bishops, and the lower clergy. They all ask how we can defend ourselves from aggression or the wicked power of Bolshevism without arms. But what I do not understand are the attacks on the churches as such and the theory of a special Aryan race to lead the world. I am quite certain that if he lives and retains power in Germany he will find himself compelled to do what all successful revolutionaries are obliged to do, that is, modify his attitude towards those who do not agree with him, and admit that all nations, like individuals, have the right to express the faith that is in them and to take an active part in the government of the land in which they live.

I am quite certain Herr Hitler is under no delusions as to the strength and influence of Great Britain and wishes for nothing better than friendship with us. He wants other things too. Already he has taken Austria by force, and this action of his is in complete opposition to the opinions I heard while in Berlin. I left Germany convinced that the whole German Government understood the complete futility of war, even though some chiefs in control might boast, as do our own war lords, of the might of their military machine. But facts are stubborn things even for the Führer. Armies still fight on their stomachs and civilians cannot exist for long on substitutes. To live, Germany needs peace as much as any nation in the world. No one understands this better than Herr Hitler. I do not minimise the fact that men in such a position as he is often find themselves driven to courses they know may be disastrous. When I came away it was my sincere belief that if

negotiations could be started at once accommodation might be found. This was not done and we all deplore the results.

This was the most lasting of my impressions of Herr Hitler. Sometimes I have contrasted him with Lenin, who received me in February, 1919, and whom I recognised immediately as one of the world's great men. Yet he believed in force and imprisonment and death for those who resisted his form of government. My judgment may be wrong but somehow I am convinced that I am right. The Great War broke up Europe, unfastened minds, hurled into power over huge territories scores of untrained men. These men have shown a breadth of view coupled with ruthless force which has amazed and puzzled mankind. Lenin has passed away, but his work remains and his theories and schemes are finding expression in ways which experience has compelled his successors to adopt. But the fact remains that Soviet Russia has become one of the recognised Great Powers of the world, even though the governments of the great Capitalist democracies hate its industrial, social, and political form of government and administration. This is because conditions compel both sides to realise they cannot live separate from each other. This must happen in Germany. Those who argue that we must not assist Germany to become prosperous because she will then become more intolerant and dangerous, use an extremely foolish if not dangerous argument. Nothing is more certain than the simple commonplace fact that Germany and Russia must live and develop their internal life through relationships with each other and other nations. Any who think this can



be prevented either by brute force, boycott, or any other means are harbouring a great illusion. Capitalist governments have largely given up fear of Russia and now trade with her. Germany stands in the place recently occupied by Russia and through her statesmen she demands a place in the comity of nations on terms of equality. This cannot be denied her. It is simple common sense to welcome her as a great nation to a world conference and there discuss her needs. These are not too great to be satisfied if the spirit of goodwill and co operation is shown. Once such agreement is reached as will remove economic and territorial obstacles, disarmament all round will be possible. Neither the German Government nor the nation desires war, and given a reasonable chance to share the world's resources and markets, Germany will again join in discussions on how to abolish war by abolishing ornaments, because of all the Great Powers, Germany needs peace as much, if not more, than any of them, and once she is on the road which will lead to national prosperity secured by industry and trade, neither Herr Hitler nor anyone else in Germany will be able to maintain the present system of government, even if they desire to do so.

As soon as I left the Chancellor, I met the press representatives for the general statement which I had promised.

Every foreign press correspondent in Berlin was present and a large number of German representatives, all demanding particulars of what I had said and Herr Hitler's replies. It would be repetition to give my replies here even if I could remember, but one thing is firmly embedded in my mind: all the world is interested in Germany and

she is interested in the world. The German Government is not isolationist and wants a very great deal from the world which they understand must be paid for.

When I started this chapter I recollect the fact that over thirty years ago I visited Germany as a member of the Royal Commission on the Poor Law in order to learn how better to deal with poverty, casual labour, and unemployment. Since my recent visit, representatives of the International War Graves Commission have visited Berlin to bring about co-operative effort to care for the graves of German as well as other soldiers who fell in the Great War. German generals, field marshals, air force chiefs, naval experts, and others have visited Britain to inspect our war preparations, and our leading officials have visited Germany on the same errand. Mr Geoffrey Lloyd, who is in charge of British air raid precautions, is at the moment of writing in Germany studying Germany's air raid defence. He is also going to Paris. Mr Leslie Burgin, our Minister of Transport, and some of our Members of Parliament have recently visited Germany to try to discover how to prevent mass murder on our roads and how roads should be constructed. Mr Burgin has returned loud in his thanks for the courtesy and information he has received, and equally loud in his praise of German genius in road making.

I just want my readers to try and visualise the mad topsy turvy world in which we live. Germany is said to be our most powerful potential enemy. We are told she is preparing to destroy us, and yet our representatives meet hers to discuss war graves (a right and proper thing to do), and each other's means and preparations for

mutual destruction And our brilliant young Under-Secretary for Home Affairs is discussing with those who are to bomb our towns how best we can counter their attacks *Alice in Wonderland* never imagined anything more ludicrous I am told it is useless to talk peace It may be so It is, however, more reasonable to insist that statesmen shall meet and discuss how to remove the causes of war rather than continue to play the fool with each other in the way I have just mentioned

My third and last day in Berlin was Herr Hitler's birthday, and as I did not wish to look at soldiers marching, I determined to see what I could of working class Berlin In company with my friends I went to the Jewish and poorer parts of Berlin, where I saw many rather poor-looking blocks of tenement dwellings and many fine new working class blocks of tenements laid out in a spacious manner, and pleasant parks and play grounds We met children and parents doing exactly what similar children and parents would be doing in England We spoke to a few of them, Corder Catchpole explaining who we were and why we were in Berlin Without exception each person with whom we talked in this haphazard manner spoke enthusiastically of Great Britain and their desire for peace We looked at a large Jewish Synagogue and saw much the same kind of people who live alongside me at Bow This birthday is not a general holiday, so we were able to go into one or two warehouses and meet people at work I asked no questions because if anybody wanted to say they disliked dictatorship I knew they would not do so, but the workpeople, both men and women, whom I saw at their midday meal, treated me exactly as work-

people in England would treat similar visitors—they just ignored us. One large packing warehouse was most efficiently run, and here we heard much about the joy through work, etc.

After a tiring day of talking and visiting we caught the night train for home, very weary and tired, but very grateful indeed to all those German officials, and especially to our own British representative, Sir Ogilvie Forbes, for the great courtesy and kindness and helpfulness we had received from them. As we left, a leading German said to me. "You should be thankful you are English. Your country moves along by evolution, Europe by violent revolution. This makes you quite unable to understand us."

My visit to Hitler, and his reception of my proposal, caused more sensation than any other. The reception of it in the press was on the whole very favourable; though some papers disapproved, all paid it the greatest attention

## *Chapter VII*

### ROME

**AFTER** Berlin, Rome My proposal to interview Signor Mussolini also caused much discussion among my friends and the Press, though on this occasion I received no protests from anyone All arrangements for the visit were made by Count Grandi, the friendly and courteous Italian Ambassador at the Court of St James Count Grandi, like all members of the London diplomatic corps whom I have met, is extremely well informed concerning our governmental system and party allegiances Naturally, in discussion with a person like myself he does not debate the right or wrong of democracy for us, but he is unflinching in his loyalty to the Fascist state in Italy and his chief, Signor Mussolini. He does not apologise for the recent policy of his country, but takes it for granted that Italy has right and justice on her side There was no necessity for me to explain my views to him he knew all about my position in the Labour Party and why I resigned the leadership

We did not waste our time discussing our respective political faiths But I listened with interest to what a man of his experience had to say in defence of Fascism

He is a staunch upholder of his creed and without question believes Signor Mussolini has saved the Italian nation from destruction. He did not explain why he and others went over to Fascism. He left me to divine their reasons for myself. For him the argument is a closed book and his faith in the principles of government and administration in Italy is unshakeable. He took this for granted but he also took my pacifism for granted although, like most of my fellow members of Parliament and nearly all foreign statesmen, he thinks I am entirely wrong. All the same he treated my proposal to see his chief in Rome as reasonable and was certain our discussion of economic, financial, and territorial difficulties could result in nothing but good. On one occasion while talking with Count Grandi I was struck by the fact that I had never heard one word from him, or any other diplomat, antagonist to any other nation or Government. There is strong disagreement as to the methods of government, but no hostility to nations as such.

When I met him over this visit it was possible for me to say to myself "I have now seen and talked with nearly all the representatives of the bigger nations and can answer the question often put to me: 'Do you still think a conference is possible and would it do any good?'" My answer is yes. If I were European dictator I should set the leading diplomatists now in London the task of preparing for a conference of their chiefs, starting with discussion and continual conference between themselves. They meet in a most friendly manner at receptions and other public functions. They know the weak and strong points of each other, and chief of all, they

understand the absolute necessity for peace and know this is possible of attainment through goodwill and common sense I say this with a very keen appreciation of the terrors now being inflicted on Spain and China Nothing I have heard or seen in any of the Embassies in any way shakes my belief that, if these men representing the various forms of government were given a free hand for a month or two to consider world problems and suggest a way out, ultimate success would follow their discussions Secret diplomacy is not yet abolished there is still a mixture of good and evil, lies and truth in all discussions If I had power I should instruct these ambassadors to meet each other as ordinary persons and discuss without reservation the needs of each nation and what could be done to meet them This would be a revolutionary change in diplomatic methods I am certain that diplomats only need to be given the opportunity and they will one and all cheerfully fill the position of revolutionists determined to save the world from war They must, however, be given a free hand to start the discussions Their conclusions would of course be ratified or rejected by the respective Governments

But I must pass from the London diplomats to my journey In company with Rudolph Messel and Percy Bartlett I left Victoria on July 8th, 1937 We had the usual kindly, generous send off from many friends, including our beloved Dick Sheppard, pressmen, and photographers In some way I looked forward more to this journey than any of the others because other journeys had taken me to countries I had previously visited, but only once had I seen a tiny bit of Italy, Ventimiglia, a small town near Monte

Carlo into which I had crossed one very hot day in July 1910, or thereabouts. Now I was going through France to Italy, from Calais to Rome, and it was a journey I had longed to make. Ho and wearisome as the journey was at times, my mind was full of joy that at long last I would be in the city of the Cæsars, and above all in the city which in one form or another has kept alive the Christian faith for nearly two thousand years. I know and understand how often the organised churches have failed in their mission, but I also understand that all down the centuries the power in the universe we think of as God of our life, has never been without witnesses to the truth that love is the solvent of all evil and that brotherhood is the hope of the world. As we rushed along, after leaving Paris, into the night, I found it difficult to sleep, and in the early morning I looked out of the train window and saw that we were passing through Aux-les-Bains. A little later we passed the frontier at Modane and soon after were in the Mont Cenis tunnel. The noise informed me of that. Once out of the tunnel we soon reached Turin, then Genoa, and for some time we journeyed along a rocky coast, passing Pisa, where we caught a glimpse of the famous leaning tower. Florence called up memories of Savonarola and George Eliot's story of *Romola*. A young person would have been thrilled doing this journey for the first time. Old in years as I was, I was quite as excited as any young person though I tried hard to suppress my ignorance about places and to express my unbounded admiration at the sight of fine buildings, public squares and splendid bathing places which we continually caught sight of from the train. Thus, I thought,



was the glorious Italian Riviera of which I had heard and read 4 Years ago I had seen Monte Carlo and the French Riviera where the sea and scenery are glowing and splendid to look at I did not know how to compare the two rivieras Nice and Monaco are lovely places, especially the fine old town of Monte Carlo which stands high above the Casino and pigeon shooting establishments But these huge buildings seemed out of place on that beautiful coast Along the Italian coast there seemed to be more real workaday life plenty of pleasure resorts, but also shipping ports and towns and cities where people labour for their daily bread

The loveliest part of the journey was across wide open spaces flanked afar by large hills and mountain ranges What sturdy, hard working toilers these Italian peasants must be In some parts their tiny patches of cultivated land seemed quite inaccessible We were told that the standard of life was very low and made worse through heavy taxation for the war in Abyssinia and preparation for future defence Some people explained the low standard of living and bad housing as being more bearable in a warm country than in a cold one Perhaps so But I have heard and read the same explanation concerning the poverty, disease, and dirt amid which millions of our British fellow Indian citizens exist in India I have seen enough of poverty and destitution face to face ever to excuse or explain why in these wonderful days of scientific knowledge poverty and destitution should exist anywhere, either in town or country I saw much destitution among the peasants in Ireland when I was there in 1887 I knew then as I know now that such destitution and poverty

is a disgrace both to our common humanity and that which we think of as religion and is and always was due to man made causes. These Italian peasants and workers are, as I have already suggested, paying for Italy's share in the Great War and for the cost of the Abyssinian and possible future wars, just as the workers in Britain are paying for the same thing. The cost of armaments of every kind robs children, men, and women in all countries of the means of life.

Now and then we came across scenes which recalled wars of the past—huge castles and small towns perched high up above the plain, built to defend vested interests of the ancient nobility. Mankind will never know the number of innocent, hard toiling peasants and workers who have sacrificed life and limb destroying each other at the bidding of landowners, princes, and kings. This twentieth century finds us being asked to fight about the same kind of economic and territorial questions over a wider field. In the old days these were disguised under the name of one form or sect of the religion of love, now we are asked to destroy each other for one political system against another in order to decide similar economic questions. We shall not settle them by slaughter any more than our fathers did. Wherever I go this is the truth which present day industrial and social conditions teach me. I doubt very much if the conditions of millions of people in Europe, America, and Britain are relatively better now than they were two hundred years ago. There have been immense material gains for many millions of people of all classes, but it is also true beyond all question that masses of people are quite unable to enjoy any of

these improvements. Left alone these Italian peasants might be content, but modern life is reaching them and even a little knowledge is waking them from the apathy of centuries. Conscripting them for war, educating them, mixing them with others in all sorts of occupations away from the land—this is the revolutionary propaganda which is wakening them and creating new ideas of life and action.

We saw, at the various stations at which we stopped, crowds of everyday people going to and from their daily occupations. They looked quite comfortably dressed and well set up, though physically they were not so large and bulky as we Northerners. This, we were told, was due to climate and to food. No one can form any true opinion about the condition of a people by seeing them in this cursory manner, it is only possible to look around and from observation try and discover whether contentment or discontent shows in the face and manner. My impression is that hard and difficult to be borne as heavy taxation and the denial of freedom such as we enjoy is, there is no large amount of discontent, but on the contrary a sort of restrained belief that Mussolini is making Italy a great imperial nation. What benefits this new power over people in Africa is going to bring them, no worker to whom I spoke appeared to have any very clear idea.

I suppose no man who has lived my past could travel this journey without recalling the days of Mazzini, Garibaldi, and Cavour, all three of whom were names which children of my generation were taught to admire as much as the name of the first King of united Italy, Victor Emmanuel. For some reason I remembered too the name of Bomba,

the King of Naples, and the political prisoners tortured to death in the prisons of that city by his order, and Mr Gladstone's furious exposure of him. To one going about Europe this question of prisoners is a perfect nightmare, and as we journeyed I wondered how much any Government had advanced away from the spirit of persecution and torture, which is what is usually meant by imprisonment for one's faith and opinions. I remembered most of all Mazzini and his gospel of "Duties as well as rights" and his motto of "God and the People". Also I remembered Garibaldi and his red shirts, how he rallied them for a great idea and promised nothing more than service for an ideal. They failed as did the Italian Government which in 1871 took away the temporal power of His Holiness the Pope. Things cannot be settled that way. This is proved by the fact that Mussolini has restored to the Pope the temporal power which he possessed before the Franco-German war of 1870-71. He has no large kingdom now; the Vatican City is quite small, but it is sufficient to enable representatives of the Holy See to be received in the capitals of the world and for representatives of the powers to be received by the Pope. It is a strange commentary on affairs in Germany especially concerning the Christian churches that the Nuncio (that is, the Cardinal Minister representing the Pope in Berlin) is this year Senior or Doyen of the Diplomatic Corps and was therefore spokesman on behalf of all his diplomatic colleagues at the New Year's reception given by Herr Hitler, and it was this representative of the Catholic Church who, in the name of all Governments, wished the Führer and the German nation a happy, prosperous New Year.

I wonder what the ultimate effect of Mussolini's action in restoring temporal power to the Catholic Church will be? It could be of enormous good if those in authority in that Church would here and now outlaw war in deed as well as word by refusing to sanction war of any kind. Time alone will prove this. Meantime those who are inclined to think of Mussolini as a mere blustering person may with reason recognise that he is something much more intelligent. I do not imagine he cares very much to have a power such as the Catholic Church wields enthroned within the capital city of his country. He is, however, too much of a common sense person to allow any such prejudices to stand in his way of doing what he thinks necessary to consolidate the Fascist system in Italy. So in addition to settling the question of temporal power he has also settled in its favour the question of religious instruction in the schools. I should think the Catholic Church exercises more influence over the lives of Italian children and adults than is the case anywhere else in the world, with the exception of perhaps Southern Ireland and Poland. This is a terrible responsibility for any Church to carry. I am only an ignorant layman, quite unversed in theology and all doctrinal questions regarding religion, but travelling to Rome through a country side which has seen great struggles for freedom and liberty, I could but ask myself why should any Church ask for and accept temporal power and take part in the affairs of mankind if the only result is acquiescence in evils which Governments inflict on peoples?

It is not possible for me to separate religion from anything that concerns life. I know the heads of the

Catholic and Anglican churches often issue pronouncements on public affairs, many of which contain fine declarations, but it is the acceptance of war in any circumstances which I am unable to understand. The next few years, or even weeks, may prove a tremendous testing time for the whole Christian Church, Protestant and Catholic. They have no power of compulsion, they can only try persuasion. As I approached Rome I was quite certain, and still am, that if those who claim to represent the Author and Giver of the Christian faith would with one accord fling out a challenge to all Governments demanding that all war should cease and the building of armaments be stopped while statesmen gathered together to discuss how to bring peace and not barbarism to the world, there would rise from all lands such a response as would compel every Government not only to listen but to act.

As our train slowed down to enter the station at Rome I felt quite unable to understand why those who can afford to travel should be able to secure all the comfort and pleasure from these pleasant and beautiful health resorts while the masses on either side of the frontiers are being told it is not possible to organise international relationships without huge armaments and the possibility and even probability of war. Governments must believe that it is of more importance to organise travel and recreation for the relatively few than peace for the many. Many other absurdities occurred to me, one of which was some words from the famous missionary hymn which says

Where every prospect pleases  
And only man is vile

Looking at this beautiful Italy with its ancient cities and fine buildings even from a railway train, and understanding, as I think I do, the history both of my own day and generations of the past, I felt like weeping bitter tears of anguish when realising that these innocent, hard-working courteous people and my own fellow-citizens in Britain were being taught by many newspapers and by some so-called statesmen that war is inevitable between them and us. I do not care a bit what reason men of my party or country may put forward. A war of any sort between my own people in East London and Britain generally with those I met in Italy, living hard, laborious days tending the land, looking after the play grounds of the world, will be a most unforgivable crime against humanity.

I determined during some of my quiet hours in Italy that when I returned home my countrymen should understand that war against Italy or any other nation would mean just civil war—a war, that is, against our own flesh and blood, against people subject to the same virtues and failings as we are ourselves, not against those whose insane unreason makes war. Perhaps some day people will see as clearly as I do that if we would all throw down our arms and if the big international trade unions would give up talking of boycott when wars break out, but instead would start now and organise their members together in one mighty combination and refuse to make armaments of any kind, the world would soon reach a state of peace. These Italians are not war-like people and I do not think all the propaganda and drilling will ever make them so. They are not cowards any more than we are, but masses of them live in the sun, live

simple hard-working lives near to nature, asking nothing more than to be at peace. It is wonderful how very little the workers demand from their lives of toil

We arrived in Rome early in the evening and were met by Government officials and representatives of the British Embassy. I think the crowd of onlookers, photographers, and pressmen was even greater here than in Berlin or New York. However, we posed as best we could, after which I boarded a car for my hotel. I was relieved to find that most people could speak English.

After a short rest I set out to meet the Duce. Our interview took place in the Palazzo Venezia, from the balcony of which Mussolini makes his most important speeches. Quite close is the magnificent statue and memorial to King Victor Emmanuel, who was the first King of united Italy, and just beyond are the Capitol, the Coliseum, and many of the remains associated with the great days of Rome. I am no descriptive writer and I do not remember a tenth of what I saw and thought. But there is something in the atmosphere of Rome which I have not experienced anywhere else. If I live to stand in Jerusalem and Bethany and go up the Mount of Olives, the experience will possibly be much the same but much more intense. I could not forget the early martyrs, those of whom it is written they were torn asunder and slain with swords. So full of the past was my mind that when we reached the Palazzo I had not the least idea what I was going to say when I met Mussolini and his son-in-law Count Ciano.

Friends had told me that I would be compelled to walk the length of a long room at the end of which would be



sitting the Italian Dictator, who would make me feel little better than a worm. But this was not true. Both statesmen met me at the door and were as courteous and pleasant as possible. I expressed thanks for the interview and was told "No thanks are necessary. It is a pleasure and a privilege to meet anyone who comes to discuss peace". We talked for about an hour and then adjourned to meet again later. I was glad of the adjournment for I was really very tired, and this was obviously quite evident to Signor Mussolini as it was he who suggested a further meeting. I returned to the hotel and met a crowd of pressmen, to whom it was impossible to say more than that we had discussed British and Italian relationships and the proposal for a world conference.

On Sunday I spent some time with Count Ciano, who is one of the youngest Foreign Ministers in the world. I am not sure whether he is younger than Anthony Eden. I do not think he is a cypher in Italian affairs, though as is natural he is very much under the influence and control of his father-in-law, Signor Mussolini. We talked all round the questions which divide our Governments, and if you read the speeches of Mussolini or Ciano you will find they say of Italy exactly the same things that our Ministers say of Britain. Italy, I was told, wants freedom of the seas. She has no territorial ambitions in connection with Spain or any Spanish possessions. Occupation of Spanish islands has taken place. These are statements that can be tested at any time and the truth or otherwise verified. Questions connected with the Red Sea and Africa are capable of adjustment and settlement, given goodwill and mutual accommodation between the

two Governments I am unable to go into detail, but if I could write a thousand words it would only be an expansion of the fact that the Italian Government will never from choice enter into war against Great Britain

On Monday evening I called again at the Palazzo Venezia to continue my talk with Mussolini. We discussed pretty fully the proposed economic conference and the imperative need for an economic reorganisation of life, especially in South Eastern Europe. Nobody whom I have met has a keener appreciation of the true causes of war than Mussolini. His early training with his blacksmith father and long years of work in the Socialist and Labour movement in Italy, including his editorship of *Avanti*, have given him what Socialists would call an economic foundation for his policy, and as sound as that of any Socialist I have met. He is doing his utmost to cultivate trade and commerce with his neighbours, as is well known. He is convinced that Italy has actually made a start in the work of helping to remove the danger of war in Europe by trade agreements with her neighbours. He had little faith in the success of the new economic conference unless careful preparations were made beforehand. He was in favour of the enquiries being made by Monsieur Van Zeeland, and said that Italy would play a proper part in any conference whenever it was called. He had no faith in my pacifism, but was equally certain that Europe would not be plunged into war about Spain. He did not deny privately what he has publicly admitted, that arms and men by tens of thousands have gone from Italy to Spain, but he repeated what he has publicly said that "others started it". I heard no word against

Jews from him or anyone else while in Italy, but Bolshevism was described as an enemy although there was no animosity towards the Russian people. I was reminded that Italy was the first Great Power to recognise the Soviet Government of Russia. I would give whatever I possess, which is not saying very much, if I could arrange a meeting between Stalin, Mussolini, and Hitler with somebody as chairman with a sense of humour. These three men are revolutionists, each claims great gains for his people since he came to power. There is no earthly reason why they should not agree to leave each other alone to work out their policies in their own country. Russia not only wants peace but has nothing to gain from war, and her leaders have repeatedly declared they are arming only to defend their country. It is true that all other statesmen say the same thing, but it was Litvinoff who, at the Disarmament Conference, seriously said, after a great deal of futile discussion, "We all say we want to disarm. Let us start now." This was common sense. Neither Italy nor Germany have anything to gain from war, and both Mussolini and Hitler understand this quite well, and I feel that a pleasant day's conversation in a villa on the Riviera might bring these three statesmen to realise they have nothing to lose for their people except the chains of unreason, but on the contrary have a world of peace and security to gain.

I know this sounds impracticable, but as I have already said, these same rulers have instructed their representatives to meet to discuss intervention in Spain, and in spite of hard words and much jangling about truth they still meet. Surely it is time the principals met and talked

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It is not possible to discuss more of our conversation except to say that both Count Ciano and his chief are quite certain that neither in the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, the Soudan, or Egypt is there any question between our two nations incapable of peaceful settlement.

As for the freedom of the seas, I have heard Mr Eden in the House of Commons defining the claims of Great Britain to free, unfettered use of the Mediterranean and other sea routes, and his further declaration that what Great Britain claimed is not exclusive rights, but on the contrary what we claim for ourselves we of course concede to others. Mussolini has publicly made similar statements.

The fact is that no Great Power trusts the others. Italy has islands which she fortifies. We have similar established bases and, as in a game of chess, each player strives for positions of defence and attack. So do the naval and aviation chiefs of France, Italy, Germany, and Britain seek for jumping off places and shelters for craft of all kinds on sea and land. Therefore when these mutual protestations concerning freedom of the seas are made, there is always the mental reservation that we must see the routes are kept clear of such bases as may be dangerous in times of war. The only solution is the internationalisation of all waterways, the abandonment of all fortified naval and air bases, and the complete control of all aviation by an international board subject to a reformed, inclusive League of Nations. There is no other way of securing freedom in the air and on the sea, and unfortunately there is no statesman in any country willing to accept this solution. Ordinary people who are able to under-

with each other. We must bear in mind the fact that each of these rulers continually declare they do not desire to interfere in each others internal affairs. It is equally true that in Spain the Spanish people are suffering from the horrors and anguish of an international war being fought on their territory in the guise of a national revolution, but a talk between these three leading men in Europe might easily end this war so far as outside influence is concerned.

Thus, however, is a digression. I found it rather difficult to make myself as clear about things as I desired. The conversation was easy enough because Mussolini understands our language and speaks it, and is a really good listener. What I found most difficult to combat was the complete assurance that Italy had done nothing in Abyssinia or Spain which others, including ourselves, have not done. This statement is made again and again both in the press and in speeches, and in other countries besides Italy. The answer that since the establishment of the League of Nations and the Kellogg Pact everything has changed, did not carry me very far, but one thing came out very clearly no matter with whom I spoke—that Italy would be very glad if by any means the armaments race could be ended. One of the proposals connected with the world economic conference is that all Governments should agree to a complete standstill so far as armaments are concerned, and if necessary the smaller nations should appoint observers and inspectors to see that this was carried into effect. I am quite certain the Italian Government would agree to this proposal and am equally certain the Italian people would heartily rejoice at such a stoppage.

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of help he needs is understanding. He has not the least idea of fighting Britain. I say this in spite of all the boasting, which is not bluff, about the new born spirit of young Italy.

People ask what Mussolini is like personally. My reply is that he is like all the other workers or ex workers who have been, or are at the head of affairs in Europe. He has an indomitable will and has learnt in a very rough school how to be ruthless to those who oppose what he thinks best for Italy. It is not possible to be a dictator and not be ruthless. He is more human in some ways than others I have met. He is married, has children and grandchildren and his face brightens up when he speaks of children and the masses. It is hard, indeed impossible, for me to understand how anybody can believe that violence and war is necessary and right when he thinks of children. I have described him as a mixture of Stanley Baldwin, Lloyd George, and Winston Churchill. He is courteous and friendly, dogmatic about his own faith and creed. He is a great orator with all the fire and rhetorical expression of Lloyd George and all the ruthlessness of Winston Churchill who, when he thinks the well being of Britain is at stake, will use any and every means in defence of what he considers is right without regard to the consequences.

After this second interview with Signor Mussolini I met practically all the pressmen in Rome, a meeting which found me very tired. I gave them a summary of what I have written here, and especially appealed for a cessation of hate propaganda. I knew, I said, that many things were being done everywhere which were brutal and disgusting.



to all right minded people, but, I asked, does anyone think the world will be better through more and more hate propaganda? We talked for half an hour and then I went to supper and to bed

Before meeting the press I had been asked by the Italian friend who was taking care of us if I would like to see a health exhibition and a model of one of the children's camps, which was being shown in Rome for the purpose of raising money to send poor children to the sea and mountains in the summer time. I of course said "yes", and was soon in the midst of the civilian blackshirts who were responsible for organising the exhibition. It was a most excellent exhibition, showing all the post natal and ante natal services available for expectant mothers and their children. I was familiar with much of this work because I have seen and taken part in similar work in Poplar. All the same, I think it would have been a good thing if some of the critics of Socialist administration here could have seen how the Italian people wish to treat expectant mothers and children. I know that many people say this is done to enable the war services to be kept supplied with plenty of fighting men, but are we all quite certain our own health campaign has not something of the same sort connected with it? I am in favour of a healthy nation and so support the campaign in England, and was therefore glad to see what is being done for children in Italy. Funds are collected every year by the Fascists to enable nearly a million children to go away to the sea or mountains for a holiday of four or five weeks. After going round the exhibition I saw several hundred boys and girls at supper. They were a jolly party, noisy and chattering,

stand truth welcome very heartily such a solution. They know that peace is only possible when freedom means freedom for all.

I found time to see a little of Rome and the relics of its ancient splendour. I walked through the Forum and round the Coliseum. I visited the church which retains the statues of Marcus Aurelius and his wife and heard many stories of the unforgotten past. I also visited the little church built on the Appian Way, near the Catacombs, to commemorate a story in the life of St Peter. The story is that fearing he would be put to death, his friends persuaded St Peter to leave Rome. On his way out of the city he met Jesus and St Peter asked "Whither goest thou, Master?", and the answer came "I go to Rome to be crucified again". As I listened without understanding the language to the aged Italian woman who told the story and looked at the mark in the stone, I forgot the story of Peter and his crucifixion after he returned to the city rebuked and abashed by the vision he had seen. I thought of Rome, the powerful and mighty ruler of Europe, parts of Asia and Africa, persecutor of the followers of Christ, so powerful that none could say her nay, and how, four centuries later her city and power were in ruins and the conquered people back to their original condition of barbarism. When I met Count Ciano on Sunday evening I told him my thoughts about these things and asked if Mussolini would listen if I tried to make him understand what was in my mind. Count Ciano assured me that I would be listened to, and on Monday my interview with Mussolini closed with my trying to tell, as clearly as was possible, why I thought it

was quite impossible for Germany, Japan, or Italy to recreate old or build new empires, and why it is impossible for Great Britain or any other power to retain power and domination over others. The Gospel for which the early Christians were persecuted and slain is the only gospel which can save the race. Those who ruled in Rome when she was powerful and mighty were not all wicked men. Some possessed great virtues, but they lacked what all Governments and nations lack now, and that is the love which enables us to see ourselves in others and God in us all. Force has failed, not the power of love as taught by Jesus. The words "Thou hast conquered, O Nazarene" are truer to day than ever. The old Rome perished, but the message of the Nazorene still lives in the world and is calling all peoples to renounce force, violence, and domination and rest their security on truth, equality, and love. This is a summory, as far as I remember them, of my concluding words. There was silence, we walked down the room and with a "Good night, we must do the best we can," we parted.

May I remind my readers once more of my talk with Lenin in 1920? We parted in much the same manner then. Bidding me good bye he said "We won't quarrel. Don't say I am an agnostic, I am an atheist. But you go home to England and convert the Christians." Mussolini is (I think) a practising Catholic. My impression of him is that no man in this world feels the weight of responsibility more than he does or would more willingly make some sacrifice for peace, but he, like others, is in the grip of circumstances and conditions which he alone cannot deal with. He must be helped by others. The kind

of help he needs is understanding. He has not the least idea of fighting Britain. I say this in spite of all the boasting, which is not bluff, about the new-horn spirit of young Italy.

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After this second interview with Signor Mussolini I met practically all the pressmen in Rome, a meeting which found me very tired. I gave them a summary of what I have written here, and especially appealed for a cessation of hate propaganda. I knew, I said, that many things were being done everywhere which were brutal and disgusting.

to all right minded people, but, I asked, does anyone think the world will be better through more and more hate propaganda? We talked for half an hour and then I went to supper and to bed

Before meeting the press I had been asked by the Italian friend who was taking care of us if I would like to see a health exhibition and a model of one of the children's camps, which was being shown in Rome for the purpose of raising money to send poor children to the sea and mountains in the summer time. I of course said "yes", and was soon in the midst of the civilian blackshirts who were responsible for organising the exhibition. It was a most excellent exhibition, showing all the post natal and ante natal services available for expectant mothers and their children. I was familiar with much of this work because I have seen and taken part in similar work in Poplar. All the same, I think it would have been a good thing if some of the critics of Socialist administration here could have seen how the Italian people wish to treat expectant mothers and children. I know that many people say this is done to enable the war services to be kept supplied with plenty of fighting men, but are we all quite certain our own health campaign has not something of the same sort connected with it? I am in favour of a healthy nation and so support the campaign in England, and was therefore glad to see what is being done for children in Italy. Funds are collected every year by the Fascists to enable nearly a million children to go away to the sea or mountains for a holiday of four or five weeks. After going round the exhibition I saw several hundred boys and girls at supper. They were a jolly party, noisy and chattering,

and reminding me strongly of our old Poplar school at Hutton, which is now under the London County Council. After supper they all lined up round a flagstaff, led by half a dozen small boys each carrying a toy gun. They gave me the Fascist salute, which I returned with the boy scout salute as best I could. They sang the National Anthem, which was in honour, I was told, of Italy, the Duce, and the King. Then the flag was saluted and hauled down and we walked back into the tent. I was asked if I would like to speak to the children and said "Yes, if you will interpret exactly what I say." So I told these children that I was from East London where thousands of children just like themselves lived. I said that I was sure all these children would want me to say this: "They hope children in Italy and in all the world will grow up to love peace and never go to war, but always remember that love is the one thing that will give peace, and all children in all lands are brothers and sisters. Good night, God bless you and children everywhere." After the interpreter had repeated these remarks there were loud cheers and I went off to the hotel grateful that I had seen a side of life in Rome which gave me pleasure and hope, though there remained the over-riding terror of war and the horror that children were being taught quite early in life to bear arms. This is a very terrible fact in the life of most children throughout Europe. Even in our own schools we still find much too much glorification of the victories attributed to war. This will stop when everyone understands that war always means loss.

Between my interviews with Mussolini and Count Ciano we went for a drive to Lake Nemi, a distance of roughly

thirty miles. It was a fine afternoon and proved a restful break from incessant talk and interviews. The lake is at the bottom of what appears to be a crater caused by some upheaval of the land. We passed many beautiful spots, and the beautiful Castell Gondolfo, now the residence of the Pope, and saw part of the reclaimed Pontine marshes, which, it is said, have rid Rome of all danger of malaria and similar fevers which used to arise from the unhealthy marshland. It is generally admitted to be a very splendid piece of work. We also saw the remains of the huge aqueduct which in the past carried water to Rome. As we passed through small villages and townships we saw what I can only describe as picture postcard scenes. Men and women seated outside their own doors and outside cafés, smoking, gossiping, and sometimes drinking. Nobody looked even moderately rich, and most were not desperately poor. The streets seemed to be as clean but not at all so well made as in Germany or Britain. They were quite safe and not at all bumpy even when we travelled at forty or fifty miles an hour.

We stayed for tea at a small café overlooking the lake. Coffee could have been had instantly, and so could wine, but tea! This was a job. The waiter said "Yes, very quickly", and in about an hour a very good pot of tea arrived. Where it came from neither of us knew, but it was worth waiting for. When we had finished the waiter came back and showed me a newspaper with a photograph of myself. He asked if I was the English gentleman and then begged me to autograph the newspaper photograph. Then quite a number of other people came to our table with pieces of paper for autographs. Rudolph

Messel and Percy Bartlett did their best with their knowledge of Italian to make the little group gathered round us understand why we were in Rome. They appeared to have read about us and were delighted we had visited their town and lake, and as we went away told us they would never fight against England, that that was too silly even to think of, and giving us the Fascist salute, sent us off with shouts and good wishes.

We wandered round Rome in a car for a couple of hours, going high up in order to get a bird's eye view of the city. It would be folly for me to try and describe all we saw, it was too vast and magnificent for so transitory a visit to give me any chance of retaining anything like a true picture of all I saw. St Peter's is a splendid cathedral standing up full and clear for everyone to see. Some day perhaps one or two of our millionaires will buy up Ludgate Hill, the Southern Railway bridge, and all St Paul's churchyard and demolish the shops and houses and leave the site clear, and so enable Londoners to see St Paul's as the Romans can see St Peter's.

Later we drove to the tiny Vatican City. We ought to have had official passes, but when the authorities were told who we were they wished to help us see whatever was to be seen of this minute city which consists only of the Cathedral, Government offices, some private residences and the enclosed home of the Pope. While we were in the Sistine Chapel two people came up, one after the other, to say "God bless you. Good luck in your work for peace." American and other visitors in the hotel, and Italians in the streets, also came up to us with the same message of goodwill, some asking for a tiny message and



autograph to take home. Sometimes I was impatient, but as the days passed and I experienced the cynicism of other people, it was good to remember, as it is good even now to know that there are some people who agree it is worth while at least to strive for peace among those who in many ways appear most hostile.

I had hoped to see His Holiness the Pope but this was not possible. I sent him an appeal through the British Minister, Mr Osborne, and received a courteous reply as follows

" BRITISH LEGATION

" TO THE HOLY SEE

" MY DEAR MR LANSBURY,

" I duly forwarded your message to the Pope, through the Secretariat of State, and have now received a letter from Monsignor Pizzardo, the Under Secretary of State, of which the translation is as follows

" ' I did not fail to transmit to His Holiness the sentiments of respectful confidence which Mr Lansbury, when he was in Rome, was good enough to address to His Holiness through your intermediary

" ' The Holy Father was deeply touched by Mr Lansbury's delicate thought and by the sentiment in favour of peace which inspired it. I beg Your Excellency so to inform Mr Lansbury and to transmit to him at the same time the Pope's paternal thanks and warm good wishes '

" Yours very sincerely,

" D G OSBORNE "

My interviews with some Catholic clerics were very much of the same character as those which pacifists are used to having with our own Protestant prelates. All those I talked with declared that war was anti Christian

but that circumstances might compel Christians to join in war. I could get no answer to my question. "How can any of us square our prayers to God asking for victory over enemies who are praying to the same God?" It was as impossible for me to understand and accept the position taken up by my friends as it was for my friends to understand me. I considered that I had the best of the argument, but who am I to put my knowledge against the profounder wit and knowledge of those trained in theology? Lord Balfour in a similar situation described himself as a child in such matters. As to myself, I am forced back on to such intuitive knowledge and understanding as I share with children. Nothing shakes my conviction that war is a blasphemy against God and a crime against mankind, so there I must leave it so far as my ecclesiastical conversations are concerned.

My most encouraging talk was with the late Senator Marconi. He telephoned to me soon after our arrival in Rome, reminding me of our meetings before the war and once after, and asked if he could come along for a chat. Of course we were delighted to say yes. Our interview was a long one and ranged over the whole field of European politics and especially Anglo-Italian relationships. Marconi could not be placed in the same category as ordinary politicians. He was Minister of Fine Arts and in that office had charge of all the priceless treasures of Italian and foreign art under the control of the Government. It was a matter of deep regret that I was unable to accept his kind invitation to visit some of the galleries under his control. Looking back and remembering the sadness of his expression I think he felt himself a doomed man.

His voice and demeanour were sad and he seemed unable to bear the thought of war between Italy and England. We talked of past friendship and collaboration and could not believe such differences as there were between our countries could not be adjusted. He did not excuse the Abyssinian expedition. He explained it putting blame on the Allies at the end of the war in not fulfilling their promises made to Italy before she entered the war. He told us what we had heard elsewhere—that many young Italians were convinced that Great Britain intended to throw Italy out of Abyssinia. He knew this was nonsense and understood why the League of Nations could not for the present recognise the King of Italy as Emperor of Abyssinia. Although he could not accept this decision as fair to Italy, he said what others had told us, that originally there was no question of conquering Abyssinia and dethroning the Emperor. What Italy desired was a similar position for the Emperor as that which the most powerful Indian ruler occupies in India. I could not understand how this could have been done without war. As to colonising Abyssinia itself, he was under no delusions as to the difficulties which had to be overcome but was certain they would be overcome and said that already settlers were being sent.

One remark he made sounded cynical but he did not intend it as such. We were speaking of the value of all Abyssinia as a colony for settlement. He said "If Great Britain had considered Abyssinia of sufficient value she would have held on to it when years ago she conquered that country." I suggested that if to-day it had been worth a great war it is possible that war would have taken

place There was, however, no reason why people like the Abyssinians and other African peoples should be crushed and their territories taken from them by brute force I found it impossible to follow up this argument because of the reply that came to this and all other discussions "But you (that is, Great Britain) have for hundreds of years showed us the way to Empire".

I was glad to get away from purely Italian questions concerning war I realised how hateful the thought of past and possible future wars were to him We switched round to economics and aviation He was most enthusiastic about the proposed economic conference and could not understand why Great Britain and America did not give the world a great lead He was intensely interested in the problem of distribution of goods, and maintained that it would be easy with proper organisation to employ all able-bodied people and feed, clothe, and house all mankind He must have been a real free trader because his idea was that, given a proper system of organised co-operative exchange, we would secure the sort of free trade which enables each country to produce what is suitable to their soil, climate, and means in exchange for what others can produce He understood probably better than most the plight of the peasants and land workers in Italy and elsewhere, and knew these could never be adequately dealt with except through national and international effort More than once he emphasised the fact that armaments unless soon stopped would precipitate war So in addition to the economic conference he was terribly anxious for a stop being put to the armaments race

Then we talked of aviation No man or woman could

have been more distressed than he was when speaking of Spain. He reminded me of Colonel Moore Brabazon who, speaking in our House of Commons one day, protested that it was a crime that so grand an invention as the aeroplane should be used to destroy mankind. This was Marconi's view also.

Not only about aviation but in all spheres he deplored the fact that the best scientific and inventive brains of the world were being prostituted to the service of destruction. He agreed whole-heartedly that aviation must come under international control and its use during war entirely prohibited. He also agreed with my proposal to internationalise all air ports, fuelling stations and landing fields. His idea was that this new invention should be used internationally to weld nations together and not, as now, to destroy them. He also agreed that waterways, coaling stations, etc., should come under international control. He recalled something of the discussion on this subject which the late Lord Brassey started during the Great War. I like to remember that it was possible to see and talk with this man who has given so much to the world. I do not think anybody would expect him to forsake his own country because of politics or any system of government. In his case it was not necessary. He was a Fascist and had accepted that form of government because he thought it best for Italy. All the same he had a deep abiding affection for Great Britain and had he lived we should have found him always using his influence for peace. He was emphatic in his declaration, made again and again, that war in these days of potential abundance for all was a terrible blunder, and also

agreed that Governments should call in aid men of science and invention, great organisers and skilful negotiators and set them the task of planning a new world economy. Now he has passed into that world to which we all will go and with great respect I say "May God rest his soul."

I must mention one other talk, this time with a working man and fellow traveller. I was looking out in the early morning as we were racing across France when this Italian came up and asked "What do you think of Italy and our Duce?" I replied that Italy was a beautiful country, Italians very courteous and friendly, and the Duce appeared to love Italy. Then he came to the point "Why are you English so jealous of us? You have a big part of the world besides your great Dominions. You took this in the same way as we have taken Abyssinia, and yet your people call us names and will not recognise our king as Emperor." I was rather tired of arguing this question of recognition so said "But you do not remember the Covenant of the League of Nations and the Kellogg Pact." But he had not forgotten and used the same argument that I have come up against in Europe and America. Great Britain and France had removed all questions affecting their Colonies from the jurisdiction of the League of Nations, and even Ireland could not take a dispute with Great Britain either to the League or The Hague Court, and as for India, her representatives to the International Labour Office and the League Council were appointed by the British Viceroy and his council. This workman was a good advocate for his country's policy and had read a good deal. He tried his utmost to

tell me all he considered good in the Fascist form of government

I endeavoured to tell him of our form of government and he fell back on the argument used with me many times "Oh yes, but your country and people are different" As we neared Paris he stopped the conversation by saying "Anyhow, we shan't go to war Italy wants peace and especially peace with England"

I have tried to get this man's point of view down correctly because I think it is worth while knowing what this kind of Italian is thinking That he was in earnest I am sure Whether he fully appreciated all the ruthless slaughter and misery which had been inflicted on the Abyssinians and was still being poured out on the Spaniards, I cannot say I think he did clearly understand that millions of workers in Great Britain had always opposed imperialist conquest by our own or any other Government, and had our Government pursued the policy of conquest in Abyssinia, or taken sides against the Government in the Spanish war, many thousands of my fellow-countrymen would have joined pacifists like myself in complete and continual opposition

## *Chapter VIII*

### PRAGUE

My next journey was to Prague, Warsaw, and Vienna, in company with my friends the Rev. Henry Carter and Percy Bartlett. We left Victoria on Wednesday, December 8 and arrived at Prague the next evening and were met by representatives of the British Minister and Dr. Cerny representing the Czechoslovakian Foreign Office.

Our journey out was uneventful, but a curious event occurred on the way back. No sooner were we aboard the Boulogne-Folkestone boat when we were informed that the captain would like us to go on the bridge for the journey across. We were, of course, only too pleased to do so, and when we met the captain he reminded me we had travelled together on the bridge before, during the summer of 1929 or 1930. Then I was returning to England from France where I had been spending a holiday with my wife and some of my family, and on board with us was the late Willie Graham, who, at that time, was President of the Board of Trade. He was a splendid comrade, worker, and good companion. On that occasion we all stood by while he and the captain exchanged views concerning the Board of Trade regulations for the safety



of passengers, crew, and ships at sea. I could not help recalling this happy experience when with my colleagues I found myself again on the same spot with the same captain and officers as before. Though the crossing is short, we managed to discuss world politics and especially Hitler, Roosevelt, Mussolini, and war. This little discussion confirmed my experience everywhere, which is that ordinary people in all lands dread the coming of war and talk and pray for peace. If it were possible to take a plebiscite in all countries, there would be an overwhelming vote for peace at any price. Men who earn their living at sea are especially understanding and wise in their judgments. I think men who work in mines are similar in character and temperament. It is living in daily peril which makes them tolerant. A great deal of cynicism, ridicule, and misunderstanding come my way, and it was good for me to find our work for peace treated not only with respect but enthusiasm. These sailors on Channel boats remember only too well the shiploads of clean-limbed, healthy young men who crossed from England to France between 1914 and 1918, and they remember how many never returned, and how many came back broken in body and spirit.

Meeting such men sets me wondering why things are not different, because I have had similar discussions with workers and others in all lands. It is a genuine disappointment to me to realise that so many people know the truth and yet will not unite to follow it. Perhaps my mind is in too much of a hurry. Education has improved, everybody knows more than in my youth, and they should be able to use their minds more effectively. One source

of satisfaction for me is found in the fact that ordinary people are slowly developing the capacity for understanding, and listening to the captain and his colleagues convinced me that those who work for peace will not labour in vain

I must end this digression and get back to our outward journey From the minute that we arrived at the Czechoslovak frontier on Sunday night bound for Prague, everybody we met did their utmost to make us feel at home The railwaymen insisted on seeing to the warmth of our compartment, when we stopped at stations soldiers and civilians gave us smiles of welcome I remember on one occasion long ago travelling to Scotland with the Rt Hon George Barnes, a very good friend of mine and a valiant trade unionist As we crossed the Tweed he said "George, open that window and let us breathe the free air of Scotland and Democracy" Another friend with us replied "Yes, open the window, except for rain, air is the only thing free in Scotland" In Czechoslovakia we could feel at once that the air was democratic, and as for it being the only free thing, we certainly could not complain of the generosity of our reception Looking back over the past two years I admit that wherever I have gone statesmen have been very kind indeed, but in Scandinavia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Austria, I felt more at my ease to say everything that was in my mind than elsewhere, even more so than is sometimes the case, on some occasions, in London This kind of true "liberalism" is due very largely to long years of example and influence of the late Thomas Masaryk, first President of Czechoslovakia This great man is another of those

comparatively unknown men who came to power at the end of the war. He was born in Moravia in 1850, and grew up a scholar and a patriot in the best sense of those often misused words. After years of struggle, during which he travelled all over the world and was ably assisted by his young colleague Dr. Edward Benes, the old kingdom of Bohemia with some additions was, at the end of the war and as part of the Peace Settlements, created as a nation and became the Czechoslovakian Republic. The responsibility for establishing this form of government was entrusted to a Czech national committee of which Masaryk was chief, and at a meeting held in Prague on December 14, 1918, the Republic was proclaimed with himself as first President. This sounds simple. On the contrary it meant many years of negotiating and cutting through political intrigue by Dr. Benes and Masaryk before the great day in December saw the establishment of self government. Thomas Masaryk belonged to that type of Liberal who really believes in freedom of thought, speech, and Press. The position in his country in the world to day has been brought about because he insisted on toleration as the foundation of all Government action.

No government in any country is able to claim that in all circumstances perfect freedom of speech and Press is practised. Within the British Empire both at home and abroad there is always some restriction on social, industrial, and political activities. We ourselves still live under the influence of the Trades Dispute Act and other restrictive laws. I was told in Prague that some similar restrictions are at present in force. This in no way destroys the fact that for a State made up of nationalities with wide

differences in customs, language, and culture, the Czech Constitution framed and administered under the guidance of Dr Masaryk has given a high degree of freedom and unity. The frontiers may not have been wisely drawn. No doubt Masaryk to the extent that he was responsible regarded the Sudeten mountains as natural defence in case of war. He was not a pacifist and therefore would be among those who would rather face the problem by taking a German minority of three and a half millions than accept a weaker frontier. However, from the very first moment until he resigned his post, he worked unceasingly to bring all minorities into complete harmony with the rest of the nation. This was no easy task as the following table shows.

Czechoslovak Republic	Czecho- Slovaks	Ger mans	Mag yars	Poles	Ruthe nians	Jews
	9 688	3,231	692	81	549	189
	(In thousands)					

The Parliament consists of a House of Deputies and a Senate. Women as well as men are entitled to vote at the age of twenty-one for the House of Deputies, and at the age of twenty-six for the Senate. There has been an odd change recently in the methods of election as follows.

"At the beginning of April, 1935, Parliament passed a new electoral law whereby a political party which does not obtain a fixed number of votes (*quorum* or *numerus quorum*) in the entire area of the State secures the number of mandates due to it at the first scrutiny, but remains empty handed at the second scrutiny when the mandates are distributed among the remaining votes. In this second scrutiny consideration is given only to those votes of the parties which have secured at least

20,000 valid votes in the electoral district and at least 120,000 in the State as a whole. This applies to the elections for the House of Deputies, whereas for the Senate the party must secure not 20,000 but 35,000 votes in a single electoral district."

In the present House of Deputies there are forty-four German representatives and in the Senate twenty three, led by Knnrad Henlein, the Nazi leader of the "Sudeten" Germany minority, which lives for the most part along the western frontier, sometimes described as the Sudeto Basin at the foot of the mountains of which I have spoken.

My friends in Prague will disagree with me when I say that in my opinion they would be safer without any armaments. It is useless in these days for small nations to arm. The Prague Government, however, does well in the efforts it is making to secure economic unity. If the Big Powers mean peace, then Great Britain and the others should back up this valuable work. The talks we had with pressmen and others here brought to us a realisation of how much a small nation can do to dispel the ghastly fear of war and its inevitability. These statesmen are realists, and like their compatriots in Northern Europe are shaming great statesmen by persistently working for real peace. We started our conversations in good heart because we knew we were with men who are not defeatists in the case of peace and who put armaments of all kinds second in their policy for securing peace.

When I entered it, this city of Prague with a very thin mantle of snow was at first glance fairyland. Out in the main streets were huge Christmas trees lighted up with scores of electric bulbs and everywhere large bundles

of smaller trees laid around for sale. Huge sums of money were collected for charitable purposes by voluntary workers around these trees. We saw this wherever we went on this journey and it made us realise that Christmas was still a great festival in which millions of people liked to take part. This old city is built on two sides of a wide river from one side of which big hills rise. Ancient and modern buildings, palaces, and churches, Government offices and a fine cathedral have been built on the summit and slopes, and lower down, near the level of the river, are the Houses of Parliament. Very old and to me most wonderful are the City Hall and University buildings, said to be centuries old, and a tiny Jewish synagogue built with very thick stone walls almost below the pavement, said to be fifteen or sixteen hundred years old. This synagogue is in the midst of what was once the Jewish Ghetto, a thing now, thanks to the Republic, entirely swept away. The old chains which formerly were stretched across the streets to keep the Jewish population inside the Ghetto at night are now kept as curiosities in the Town Hall, in the same way as we preserve stocks in our country villages to remind the people of the present day of the cruelties which used to be inflicted on people whose only crime was they did not choose the right parents. I saw the statue of John Huss and was reminded that we in England owed him a great debt of gratitude because without his life and work we should have had no John Wychiff. I found myself wondering whether the moderns have really given the world anything better in the way of art and culture than I was seeing here. Old streets were very narrow and churches sometimes seemed gloomy, but

all the same there was a simple grandeur and real solidity in these buildings which ferro concrete and artificial marble can never give. The thought which never left me was thus: "People of various degrees of culture, religion, and race live in this country side by side. They are held together in peace with very little show of authority though their wealth and education is unequal. These millions go to their daily tasks in the morning and home at night without fear. Yet nations have not yet learned how to do this in an international manner." I remembered Longfellow's poem, "The Beleaguered City" which tells of the gruesome fancies which haunt the human soul.

"And when the solemn and deep church bell  
Entreats the soul to pray  
The midnight phantoms feel the spell,  
The shadows sweep away  
Down the broad vale of tears afar  
The spectral camp is fled  
Faith shineth as a morning star,  
Our ghastly fears are dead."

These verses often helped me to banish fear and renew my faith that even the massive engines of destruction will yet fade into nothingness before the spirit of goodwill and co-operation, which is slowly expressing itself in the minds of people in all lands.

We spent Friday hard at work from early morning to late at night. We started with an interview with Dr. Hodza, the Prime Minister. His Government is a Coalition one. He has held office as Prime Minister since 1935, and was his own Foreign Secretary until March 1936. He is a member of the Republican Party.

Dr. Hodza received us most cordially, complimenting us

on our efforts for peace and assuring us of his own and his colleagues' support. He is not a pacifist, he is, however, strongly opposed to the idea that war is inevitable and will do everything possible to maintain peace. He is no isolationist, but believes in the future of his own people. He knows nations cannot live alone and therefore toils unceasingly together with his colleagues for free intercourse with their neighbours and all other people. We discussed at some length the question of an alternative to war. During this journey it was possible to discuss M. Van Zeeland's mission and the work of his colleague M. Frère. Wherever we went and with all we talked this question continually came up. "What will Van Zeeland propose?" There was here in Prague a feeling of expectancy that as a result of this mission of M. Van Zeeland and his recommendations, a real endeavour would be made by the Great Powers to deal with the economic, financial, and territorial difficulties which confront the world, and turn the minds of statesmen away from war.

Mr. Hodza stands in relation to the other Danubian Powers in a rather similar position to that occupied by Herr Sandler of Norway to the Powers who signed the Oslo Agreements. He is anxious to see economic unity between all the new and old States and has written some excellent articles on the subject. The Government at Prague, he told us, is completely united in its faith that some day, the sooner the better, there will be economic unity throughout Europe. As I have said, his Government is not exclusionist and the Danubian Agreement it desires is sufficient proof of this. He is quite confident that the



steps his Government are taking to bring about freer trade intercourse between the Danubian nations are a stage on the way towards an economic agreement for all Europe. As to the internal condition of Czechoslovakia, he does not deny that in places there is some distress and discontent due to causes he holds to be beyond the control of any government. We know only too well it is much easier to see the evil results of a depression than it is to be able at once to stop the depression and restore trade. When coming to Prague we had in our minds a proposal that these Danubian States might possibly join up with those States in Northern Europe who were acting together as the Oslo Group and together made a united block at Geneva for the purpose of bringing pressure to bear on the Great Powers in order that the causes of war should be brought to the front and dealt with. We mentioned this proposal, but quickly realised that there was nothing doing along that line. When we are inclined to criticise smaller nations because they at times seem to swing to one side and then to the other, we should remember how dependent small nations are on the wealthy nations. When I say nations I mean, of course, the financiers, bankers, monopolists and others, who wield enormous powers both nationally and internationally, a power which is easily and unobtrusively used either to help or hinder those in need. "They must hold a candle to the devil", the devil being the moneylender.

Dr Hodza is under no delusions concerning the need for a cessation of economic strife. He is the counterpart in the Danubian area of Mr Cordell Hull, the United States Secretary of State who tells the nations, "Trade

or perish " The Danubian nations I speak of are Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Austria, Roumania, Jugoslavia, Bulgaria, and I would include Turkey and Greece, though they are not considered as coming within the geographical expression, neither is Poland Yet it should be as easily possible to include Poland as any of the others They are all small nations compared with those considered Great Powers None of these States is as yet fully developed, each needs something the others possess or produce I gathered the impression as I listened to Dr Hodza that he was a far seeing practical idealist, one who has seen the futility and folly of war and is determined to use every scrap of influence and power he possesses to bring his own people to understand that peace must be universal and inclusive of all peoples, and that the first step is for nations to agree to abolish the spirit of war by making a start to abolish economic warfare

There is an old English saying that if each person in a village keeps his doorstep clean, the whole village will be clean As I understood him, Dr Hodza and his Cabinet wish to clear their nation from all restrictions of trade They know this can only be done by co operative effort, so they start with the proposals for a Danubian settlement which shall extend right across Europe and finally include small and great powers, including Soviet Russia

As I left Dr Hodza's room I knew I was leaving a man who had come to be the head of a government from the ranks of the people, and I was sure that so far as it lay in his power he would never let them down

After this extremely helpful meeting we went on to meet Dr Kamil Krofta, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs

He received us with equal friendliness. He is so full of confidence as to the future of his country as the rest of his colleagues. While aware of all the difficulties with which world politics surround their small country, not a single statesman we met in Prague spoke in terms of fear or appeared to think of the future with anything other than hope and confidence. Dr Krofta has been a keen student of the Minorities question and is looked upon as an authority on that subject. In a preface which he wrote to a recently published book entitled *World Peace and Czecho Slovakia*, he says

"Those who in principle oppose the Peace Treaties and the new order in Europe based upon the Treaties, endeavour to convince the world that a similar process of revision ought to be applied to the provisions of the Peace Treaties that adjust the new State frontiers in Central Europe, the provisions that delimit the contour of the States in this area. Years of experience speak against them, for these years show that the new territorial status in the basin of the Danube has fully proved its worth and that compared with the former state of affairs it marks a great improvement, especially in so far as concerns the just interest and needs of the nations which for centuries have inhabited this area."

After criticism of those who pass grossly unjust criticism on the Peace Treaties, he concludes "Czechoslovakia represents an outstanding item on the credit side of the Balance Sheet of those Treaties."

It is impossible to deny the truth of what Dr Krofta says, but without doing so it is very necessary to understand other states which left the Peace Table shorn of territories are not so satisfied with the results. Such

economic unity as existed before August, 1914, was completely destroyed

As I listened to the statesmen in Prague, I think I rightly understood how true is the statement I have just quoted and how equally true it is that others, I mean small powers, do not agree they have been benefited by the destruction both of political and economic unity. Dr Krofta sees clearly that great efforts must be made to restore the latter, leaving the political frontiers as they are. It is this understanding frame of mind which stamps these men as statesmen. They understand the geographical problem of their relatively small country and the difficulties created by the presence of large and small minorities. They are determined, however, to remove every true cause of complaint in their own territories and also, what is of even greater importance, make a great effort through trade and other intercourse to bring unity between all nations. Listening to this Foreign Secretary, it was easy for me to realise the rock on which their confidence in the future of their country rests. Their eyes of understanding are not on the ends of the earth but are kept for use at home and for the nations by which they are surrounded. I do not think any one of them imagines that prosperity and peace is attainable in isolation, and I am absolutely certain that they are under no illusions about war and its disastrous results. Consequently, when speaking with any of them it is very easy to discuss alternatives. They never for one moment believe the manufacture of arms either for themselves or others is anything but sheer waste, though strange as it must sound to readers, they consider it a

waste which must be endured Dr Krofta and his colleagues are firm adherents of the League of Nations and the doctrine of Collective Security, though they are very anxious that the League should include all nations. As to armaments, they held that there can be no reduction except an all round reduction. There is also a realisation of the fact that if we want disarmament we must disarm our minds by fully understanding that all forms of war, economic or any other, are wrong. We discussed other questions upon which I have promised to be silent, but in all cases I was assured the Prague Government would work for peace through the League of Nations or in any other way that might become available, and it is as convinced as we are that a new conference must be held for the purpose of discussing and removing the causes of war.

The day after seeing Dr Krofta I read a copy of a speech he delivered in the House of Deputies early in 1937. This speech shows quite clearly why the men we met in Prague not only believe war is not inevitable, but are doing what one small nation can do to remove the causes of friction and establish cordial relations with nations whose forms of government they entirely disagree with. I commend Dr Krofta's words to those in lands far away from Germany who tell us it is impossible to get peace between nations who refuse to accept the principles of democracy. Dr Krofta is a convinced democrat. Here are some quotations which will show what I mean.

"The campaign conducted by a section of the German press and broadcasting stations in Germany against us has not been in harmony with the smooth

official contacts as reflected in negotiations and agreements I have just mentioned. I am glad to say that official German quarters to day acknowledge the inaccuracy of the long circulated assertion about the existence of Soviet aerodromes in this country. We cannot refrain from expressing the opinion that this long protracted and baseless press campaign, elaborated on false premises and circumstances, reacts most unfavourably upon the eighteen years of correct relations which have so far existed between Germany and ourselves—relations which have often been really friendly, or at least of a good neighbourly character. As we believe the repeated assurance of the German Chancellor that the Reich desires to live on terms of peace and quiet with all its neighbours, the latest economic negotiations and the atmosphere in which they took place give us reason to hope that even the hostile press campaign will give way to the good neighbourly relations which all of us on this side sincerely desire.

"This hope has been strengthened by the latest speech made by Chancellor Hitler to delegates of ex-service men. This, like all the speeches of the responsible German statesmen on the occasion of the meeting of ex-service men in Berlin, was an expression of faith in the preservation of peace and at the same time an expression of the possibility and the necessity of a settlement and agreement between nation and nation and State and State.

"In my last speech on the 22nd October, 1936, I mentioned the successful conclusion of economic negotiations in the summer of 1936 with Italy, in the last few days the outcome of those negotiations has been further improved by an agreement just signed for an increase in quotas. The decision of our Government to establish a consulate-general in Addis Ababa was the subject of a statement I made on January 5th last to a correspondent of the *Agenzie Stefani*, in which

I expressed our hope that, after the Anglo Italian agreement, Italy would be prepared to occupy herself directly with Central European questions in the sense of effective co-operation in the sphere of commercial policy with the States of the Little Entente. I also said that in the matter of an adjustment of relations in the Danubian area much would depend on the policy of Italy whose *rapprochement* with Germany would facilitate European collaboration, far more than the thought of keeping Italy or Germany away from their interests in Central Europe. I recalled once more the fact that the project put forward by our Prime Minister, Dr. Hodza, made collaboration precisely between Italy and Germany the foundation stone of any possible solution of the problem of Central Europe.

"From what I have said it is clear that a calm survey of the present situation of international contacts in their whole complex as compared with last year permits us to look forward with more assurance to the future. If the year 1936 was a truly critical year in the sense that accumulated tension threatened an explosion at more than one point, it can be hoped that the year 1937 will confirm the view that we have already passed the worst point of the crisis in international politics. Our democracy, our quiet conscience, and our good nerves have so far stood this severe test very well, I am always alive to the fact that even the most elastic and most agile foreign policy cannot have lasting success unless it is the expression of the inner strength and solid character of a State.

"It is becoming increasingly obvious that the frequently repeated view of a clash of two ideological camps, of a struggle of two *blocs*, has lost much of its convincing character. From the ideological veneer there emerge plainly the old interests and tendencies of States and nations.

"The idea of democracy and of collaboration among

the democratic States has decidedly triumphed, and continues to gain in strength. As regards our relations to countries governed upon principles differing from our own, I agree fully with what Deputy Beran, the leader of our largest Coalition Party, said on the 25th of December last, namely, that we are determined to avoid all that is calculated to mar our relations with our neighbours, and that we adhere to the principle that each State may determine its own internal regime without any outside influences whatsoever. If we demand this liberty for ourselves, we recognize it also for all others.

"The most recent discussions in the world press and the views of public opinion on Central Europe have been a reminder to us here at home that our re-established State in the year 1918 took up once more the old mission imposed upon it by virtue of its position at the cross roads of various influences and interests. The consciousness of this increases our responsibility, but it also increases our pride and our determination to go forward unswervingly in our foreign policy, a policy which strives solely for the preservation of peace, a menace to which to-day is a threat to the whole civilisation of Europe."

When we said good bye to Dr Krofta, my friends, Henry Carter and Percy Bartlett, went off with Dr Cerny, while I was taken to lunch with Dr Benes at the official residence of the President.

Although, as statesmen go, Dr Benes is a young man, he is recognised as one of the most valued and experienced European statesmen. Ever since his early manhood he was associated with Dr Masaryk. During the years immediately before and during the war Dr Benes was agitating and negotiating inside and outside his native



land. He had one object in life and that was the restoration of his people's freedom and independence. When in 1918 the Republic was established with Dr Masaryk as President, he was appointed Secretary for Foreign Affairs, continuing to occupy that position until he succeeded his friend as President in December, 1935, a period of seventeen years.

I think there is no statesman who has a clearer knowledge of world politics during and after the war than he has. He must have met every European and American leader and has been in constant and close attendance at nearly all meetings of the League of Nations Assembly, as well as at many of those gatherings in Paris and Versailles which preceded the signing of the Peace Treaties.

Therefore I knew when meeting him that although he represented a small nation, I was meeting one of those men who in days to come will be known as makers of history. We knew each other by repute and so were on easy terms from start to finish. This was made more possible because, like most of his colleagues, Dr Benes speaks our language fluently and has an intimate knowledge of our social and political life. Our conversation was devoted very largely to conditions in Czechoslovakia. He is, of course, in entire agreement with the policies of economic appeasement as laid down by his colleagues and is a convinced believer in the League of Nations, though I am sure he understands more clearly than most that the League cannot be an instrument for peace merely by force of arms, but must make its first business the removal of grievances. It is the armaments race which concerns statesmen in this country and everywhere else.

Dr Benes is a most consistent optimist because he possesses the sort of faith that removes mountains of difficulty. Together with his master and friend, Dr Masaryk, he passed through long years of struggle during which they again and again experienced what is meant by the words, 'Hope deferred maketh the heart sick', and because he never succumbed to circumstances then he believes now that his people will consolidate their new estate. He is, of course, a democrat, but this does not prevent him striving for friendship with Germany, Italy, and his other neighbours. He claims that his Treaty with the Soviet Government and with France is not an agreement to attack anybody—it is a defensive treaty and it is devoutly hoped will never be operated. This man, like General Gordon, does not understand the word fear and has no room in his mind for hatred. I heard no word of boasting about himself or the Czechs in our two hours' talk, only a reasoned assurance that war is not inevitable. He is confident that the European atmosphere is clearer. He does not live in a fool's paradise—he has no sort of diplomatic make-believe about him. His nation was the outcome of a war that nearly smashed European civilisation and like everyone else he knows that a similar war may fling them back into servitude if anything at all remained.

While working for international peace in every way possible, this Government is striving night and day to create conditions which will bring real peace within its own borders. Up till quite recently the German minority was represented in the Cabinet. This has been discontinued since Nazi propaganda has become stronger

among the Germans, though there are still German representatives in the Ministry outside the Cabinet. The Civil Service has been very difficult to organise on the basis of finding *pro rata* employment for all those belonging to the Minorities. There are the difficulties of loyalty and language. Loyalty is hard to define, it is, however, unlikely that the Government of Great Britain, Germany, or Russia would employ in its service people who openly desire either by revolution or annexation by another State to overthrow the existing form of Government. As to language, it is impossible to imagine any government being able to carry on its day by day task of government through a Civil Service which is made up of people understanding and speaking only some language which is not that used by the majority. Problems of education and national culture are easier of accommodation, but not all at once. Great efforts have been made here, as in Wales, to enable the minority languages to survive, but of necessity the Czech language must be taught to all citizens if they are to be given an equal chance of employment in public and national service. In what are described as the lower grades of service which every district, village, and city requires, such as postmen, telephonists, policemen, it is barely feasible to employ people who cannot speak to other people in a language they understand, or they themselves understand what is said to them.

Before seeing Dr Benes I had heard some of these questions talked about, and heard the argument that it should be possible for the larger minorities to take fuller control of their own areas. Dr Benes, and I certainly

agree with him, is of opinion that the policy pursued by Dr Masaryk and the Government is the only possible one and that is to make haste slowly—though not so slowly that legitimate grievances remain almost untouched. He was able to show what had been done and what was in process of being done to remove all legitimate grievances.

The Government now give those who become entrants into public service and are unable for any reason to speak or understand the official language, a period of probation during which the employed person must become fully qualified by learning the language. This will apply to civil and municipal services. The Cabinet difficulty he hopes will be solved as soon as it is found possible to secure full loyal co-operation in the governing of the country from Herr Henlein and his friends. Relations are much more friendly, and slowly but surely the economic causes of discontent and violent unrest are being dealt with. I discussed at some length the economic condition prevailing in the districts occupied almost entirely by Germans. I was helped in these discussions because I had already discussed with my friend Corder Catchpole the result of his quite recent investigation of these economic conditions. His report has been presented to the Czech Government and to Mr Newton, the British Minister in Prague. These districts are in a similar plight to the textile areas of all the rest of the world. They have suffered as Lancashire has suffered from the economic blizzard which, sweeping through the world in 1928-29, swept the Labour Government of Great Britain out of office. The prevailing industrial conditions in these

areas in the Sudete Basin are very similar to those we may see in certain areas of Great Britain. There is no revival of their basic industries. The smaller mills are for the most part inefficient and of little service. New industries must be started. Corder Catchpole estimates that a million pounds properly spent would make a good beginning.

The German minority in this country needs work. It has no unchanging Nazi faith. In turn it follows first a leader of the Right and another time a leader from the Left. Nobody I have met understands this clearer than Dr. Benes. Instead of sitting down complaining because there is discontent, his colleagues and himself are determined, I believe, to make an effort to deal in some way with the real trouble. The million pounds necessary would not be easy to get even in this country for our distressed areas. The money, however, will be found in Czechoslovakia because this is the only way to bring all sections of the nation into harmonious co-operation.

There is here, as elsewhere, the question of prisoners, political and others, such as those who refuse military service. I intend, as I have already said, writing more fully about this in a separate chapter, and here I will only say that Dr. Benes and others to whom I spoke are as disinclined to lock people up as political prisoners as were members of the Labour Government in Britain from 1929-31. We shall never get away from this dilemma. Speaking with no knowledge except that gained very largely from official sources, I think my friends in Prague are determined to use the minimum of coercion and the maximum possible of goodwill.

My readers will perhaps question why these relatively speaking new statesmen, not one of whom has a title or has ever belonged to a governing class, have created so much admiration in my mind. The answer is simple: they face every question realistically and answer questions without reserve, as did Lenin and Stalin. They are under no delusions about the dangers which may confront their people, but they refuse to live in an atmosphere of fear. They are conscious that since 1918 they have made many mistakes and they are not self-righteous. Remember that some of them have been rebels and are able to put themselves in the place of those who would rebel against them. Consequently they pin their faith for the future of their country on conciliation and co-operation, and not on coercion. I know at times they feel obliged to suspend laws and enact others which curtail freedom. This, I am sure, is not from choice.

After these interviews the Government agreed to our issuing the following statement:

"Mr. George Lansbury and his colleagues were received this morning by the Prime Minister, Dr. Milan Hodza, and by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Kamil Krofta, and later Mr. Lansbury lunched with the President of the Republic, Dr. Benes.

"Recalling his earlier discussions with leading statesmen of other European countries, Mr. Lansbury explained his proposals for an economic approach to the problem of general appeasement. He referred to the suggestions made by King Leopold of Belgium in Brussels in August last, and later in London, and to the fact that a report from M. Van Zeeland in connexion with the economic difficulties of the world was expected shortly. The Czechoslovakian statesmen were

agreed that this report must receive most careful consideration from the Governments of the world. Dr Hodza described the progress of recent economic agreements between Czechoslovakia and other Danubian countries. He went on to speak of more recent approaches to Germany and Italy, made in view of the importance of co-ordinating the economic interests of the states of South-Eastern Europe with those of the Great Powers, and expressed his determination to continue in his policy. All the Ministers were unanimous in the opinion that the path to peace is clearer than before, and that, in fact, Europe as a whole is struggling to find a way through to friendly co-operation. They were also convinced that the obstacles standing in the way are not insuperable, but that, given goodwill, they can be overcome. Throughout the conversations the Czechoslovakian Ministers made evident their desire to resolve the problem of European peace and economic prosperity, and stressed the anxiety of the Czechoslovakian people to make their full contribution to a peaceful and equitable settlement."

After this interview I waddressed two big meetings and gave a number of press interviews. I must gratefully acknowledge that the press in Prague as well as elsewhere gave us quite reasonable and good reports. We met a few members of the House of Deputies at lunch in one of the clubs. We were a small party, some of whom were Germans, with whom we discussed the Sudeten economic, social, and political questions. In some ways these talks were rather more informative than others. This was because we were speaking intimately with those who had to deal with the problems day by day. Later we met friends connected with the War Resisters' International and other pacifist and political groups. We did

not ask to see privately Herr Henlein or any other minority leaders, though we met some at our meetings

Sunday was a cold, wintry morning, with some snow, which gave us a rather bleak welcome when we left our hotel to go to services a couple of miles away at a social settlement which is organised by our comrades Premysl Pitter and Olga Fierz. We had been asked to attend the morning service at nine thirty and I was to give an address. Both these comrades are Socialists and out-and-out war resisters. They met us at the station and were responsible for the splendid mass meeting in the Corn Exchange. The service was conducted by Comrade Pitter, and Olga Fierz gave a much appreciated translation of my address, almost sentence by sentence. The hymns were in Czech, but the tunes enabled me to supply the words which I had always sung to this music. After the service there was a gathering of children—the custom in Prague apparently being an early morning service for grown ups and a Sunday school later on for the children. This school had an address by me as part of its curriculum this day. I hope it was understood, but am afraid not.

Later, Percy Bartlett and I went for a long drive through some wonderful scenery and along dangerous, slippery roads, partially covered with snow, to Karlstein. This is a castle perched on top of a very high hill within which there are remarkable pieces of furniture, pictures, and a rather beautiful chapel. I stopped at the foot of the hill and enjoyed myself dreaming of the times that castle had resisted invasion and what attack and defence had cost in human life. I asked myself again and again what is progress, in view of the fact that civilisation has



advanced so much that a single bomb is able to kill and maim thousands of people. But hunger roused me and I walked into the small inn where we were to have lunch and amused myself looking at pictures of princes and others, and smelling the food which was being prepared for us. Our host was Mr. Ota Voytišek. He is often in London and is a strong supporter of the League of Nations and collective security, though he also thoroughly agreed with our policy of appeasement through the removal of causes of war. Our lunch was one of delicious fresh-water fish cooked as it should be cooked, and with fresh vegetables. We had dumped ourselves without warning on this innkeeper on a cold wintry day when visitors were not expected and demanded a meal; without a demur our meal was forthcoming and proved to be as enjoyable as any we had had since leaving home. We got back to Prague at about five o'clock, had more interviews, and then caught the train for Warsaw. We left too tired to sleep, but when we had waved our good-byes and thanks, we turned into our berths full of gratitude to our friends and more hopeful than when I had left Berlin and Rome, though even then I was not hopeless but at my heart full of faith that the nightmare of war and all war means would soon pass.

## *Chapter IX*

### WARSAW

THE country we passed through during the morning part of our journey to Warsaw seemed very flat. We saw some large and small industrial towns, but the agricultural land seemed rather derelict and desolate. It was winter time and this Monday was musty and miserable like many winter Mondays in some parts of Essex along the Thames. Warsaw itself is a fine big city worthy to be the capital of a nation of thirty five million people. My first thought of Warsaw was of the past, of how often during over sixty years of my lifetime I have stood in audiences or on platforms supporting demands for the restoration of Polish independence, or protesting against the persecution of Socialists, Anarchists, and others by the alien Governments which ruled in Poland until 1918. As we met Polish Jews I remembered Kropotkin, Zangwill, and Joseph Fels, all three now passed out of our vision. My mind was full of the days when we met on the first occasion to agitate for a Jewish national home in Palestine.

Here in Warsaw is the Government of the newly established Polish Republic. All the pomp and vainglory of Russian, German, and Austrian rulers has passed away. The power of life and death formerly exercised by the

three emperors has vanished. New men drawn very largely from classes never before recognised as fit to rule govern in their stead. Listening and looking around me, I could not but think, "Life is better for the masses." There is still a big curtailment of freedom and a great expenditure on armaments. The Jewish problem is far from settled. The poverty problem, which means nothing less than lack of bread for the hungry man and his family, remains unsettled. There is considerable religious intolerance which I know the Government is striving hard to overcome. In the centre of the city there are remains of the magnificent cathedral which was erected years ago by the Russian Orthodox Church and torn down when the Poles (mainly Roman Catholics) got their freedom. I think it is possible for me to understand why it was pulled down, but I cannot agree as to the wisdom of those who gave authority for destroying a building erected by people who desired to worship God in however imperfect or perfunctory a manner. In Russia, churches and cathedrals are not recognised because those who rule have for the time lost all faith in religion as practised in the world to-day. In Poland the masses acknowledge loyalty to the Roman Catholic Church. It cannot make for true harmony and peace to leave that huge square untenanted. It may be proposed to erect a Catholic cathedral, that I could not discover. It is, of course, no business of mine what should be done, but with very great respect and speaking as one whose memory is full of the struggle of the Polish people for freedom, I hope the square or a similar site will be given to the Greek Orthodox Church on which they can build their cathedral all over again.

Let me repeat that though there is nothing like the full freedom of speech, religion, and press which we enjoy, the members of the Government we interviewed appeared determined to do all in their power to establish equality before the law for all denominations. This is not an easy task and will take much time. Those of us who wish to see complete freedom for everybody must be patient. The independence of Poland is not yet twenty years old. I cannot do other than record my surprise that so much has been accomplished. Much more will be done once the Polish people absolutely refuse to spend their labour on armaments and preparation for war.

The establishment of many of the new states in Europe was not a spontaneous and generous act on the part of the victorious peacemakers. The Secret Treaties and Agreements made before and during the Great War between Russia, France, Britain, and Italy, and published to the world by the Soviet Government after it came to power, showed how the spoils of war were to be divided between the Allies. This division, despite the speeches on war aims, was wholly selfish and predatory. But though the facts have been published, we do not all understand that but for the Russian Revolution and the long years of toil, misery, death, and suffering endured by many thousands of known and unknown men and women, neither Poland nor the Baltic States would have regained their freedom. Czarist Russia did not engage in war as an ally with France and Britain for any other reason than to hold on to what she had got and to add European Turkey and Constantinople to her huge empire in addition to some huge slices of Asiatic Turkey.

One of the results of the treaties has been the creation of the "Corridor", a narrow strip of land running down to the new seaport of Gdynia. It gives Poland access to the sea at the cost of splitting German East Prussia in half, and is a continual source of bad feeling even though Hitler has privately and publicly declared that Germany will never go to war in order to win it back.

There is also another rather difficult situation which might cause trouble in the future. The Poles have annexed a portion of Lithuania of which the most valued part is the ancient city of Vilna. I do not propose to go further into this question except to say that all these small states, including Finland, have left Soviet Russia with a relatively small coast line compared with that possessed by Czarist Russia before the war. I do not think any of these annexations or the restoration of other people's territory will start a war. No Baltic nation can possibly hope to gain any permanent advantage by a war. Discussing these questions in Poland I heard more than once the same statement that I had heard in Berlin—that all outstanding questions between Germany and Poland are in a fair way of settlement. Trade and commercial intercourse are the means through which peace will be maintained. In fact, Central European statesmen are slowly, it may be, but nevertheless surely learning the simple truth that it is easier and wiser to avoid war through peaceful co-operation in developing trade than it is to waste a nation's resources on the task of preparing for mutual slaughter. From all I heard while in Poland, the Polish people think this way, even though they never cease to praise their warlike hero the late Marshal Pilsudski.

After seeing a little of Poland and meeting her leading statesmen I ask myself whether England, Scotland, and Wales would have come together as one nation with less difficulty and disorder than this Polish nation if our people had lived through more than a century of subservience and dissension under the autocracies which held power in one portion by the use of the knout and the mines of Siberia

It is very easy to think well of ourselves, but when I remember India and Ireland, I am much more tolerant of those men in Poland who at almost a moment's notice found themselves called upon to face problems which appear almost insoluble because we ordinary people are not as yet willing to forget and forgive Pilsudski's task was to unify his people, to deal fairly with the Jews who for years had been made scapegoats by all Governments, and greatest of all, to preserve peace among the minorities who live in the Corridor or in the Ukraine. Peace to an extent now prevails and this is partly due to the determination of Pilsudski and Hitler to defy, if necessary, the opinion of their own parties and work together for peace.

It was impossible in Warsaw to speak to a Gentile or Jew without understanding how much they all longed for peace. More than once we heard the words "Poland must not be dragged into war again. You English do not know what it means to have your country overrun by many millions of alien soldiers. It is collective peace, not collective war, for which we must strive."

As I will have occasion to say again and again, the causes which lead to risings of both peasants and industrial workers, Jews and Gentiles, are almost, if not entirely,

due to economic causes. No people, however downtrodden and repressed, will suffer the torments of perpetual hunger for their wives, children, and themselves, without a desperate effort to remove the causes of their suffering. Some, in India, for instance, have tried to save themselves by "non violent resistance." In the west, in Poland, and elsewhere, the same urge is expressed through revolutionary explosions or through Parliaments.

I was asked by a Jewish friend what I would do were I a Polish Jew? I am certain I should not try to kill anybody, or employ or encourage others in acts of violence. But I should be a non violent resister to all persecution and suppression and should use every vestige of power through open agitation and propaganda to influence or change the policies of government. But answers to such questions are not of much service, for my knowledge of any country other than Britain must be very small. Such as it is it enables me to say that only experience of serving in the same positions in the same circumstances should entitle us to be so confident that we should have made a better job of government than those who, at the end of the war, took up the task in Poland, Russia, Germany, and Italy. All the new Governments had to create the machinery of government, they all started heavily in debt, and inherited chaotic ruin and huge armies of disabled and broken men.

Our first interview in Warsaw was at the Foreign Office, where we met Colonel Beck, the Foreign Secretary. He is a good listener. I do not think that at first he had much confidence in the success of a new world conference. He was, however, quite determined to keep his nation

out of war. This fact helped us to appreciate each other's point of view. Colonel Beck is Foreign Secretary of a nation situated beside two large nations whose disagreements as to how nations should be governed are so fierce and strong as to be almost described as religious obsessions. Europe will be wise to give serious attention to the complaints and wishes of these small nations whose one desire is peace secured by means of political and economic appeasement. It is a self-evident fact that no statesman in the world now believes that any war, great or small, will improve anything. They all want settlements which will bring peace, and everyone knows it is only the raising of the standard of living which will give peace. So, as we continued our conversation, Colonel Beck was able definitely to say that his Government would support such a conference. He agreed with me in attaching great importance to M. Van Zeeland's report, but like our friends in Prague, he was not at all willing to let us think nothing was being done. He was quite definitely of opinion that the various economic pacts and agreements which he was already negotiating would help towards turning men's minds away from war, and this, of course, is the first step any nation must take towards peace.

While some people in Britain think nations should not join in trade with Germany and others would like to refuse trade with Russia, Poland desires trade wherever she can get it. For her trade knows no boundaries, but I am not sure that everyone in Poland or elsewhere understands as clearly as is necessary how impossible it is to send goods out of a country unless goods are also allowed to come in.



We had a very informative talk about the activities of the League of Nations other than those connected with collective security. First of all, it is necessary to say that Colonel Beck and all his colleagues whole heartedly support the League of Nations. They want to see an "All in" League and will go a very long way in concessions to bring this about. They believe it has done fine work in various fields of international cultural life, but especially through the International Labour Office and the efforts made for the suppression of the poisonous drug trade, the rescue of women from the white slave traffic, temperance, broadcasting, and many other international services.

After this interview I met Colonel Beck at lunch the next day with a number of his colleagues and the British Ambassador, Sir H. W. Kennard. On this occasion, too, our talk was extremely friendly and covered a wide range of subjects. I have said there is no acceptance anywhere of the idea that war is inevitable. This is true in Poland as everywhere else. There is, however, a very strong feeling, no stronger here than in other capitals, that no Governments realize that the sands of time are running out, and though each day which sees the area of present wars restricted is a gain, we who want peace and believe we have an alternative to war must redouble our efforts in every possible way.

After this luncheon we returned to our hotel for a rest. We were to take dinner at the British Embassy in response to the kind invitation of Sir Howard Kennard.

On Tuesday we made our way to the headquarters of Marshal Smigly Rydz, who is, I should think, the most

powerful man in Poland. He is described as Inspector-General of Defence Forces, and considered the successor to the late President Pilsudski. We had a pleasant discussion about war and how to avoid it. At first I felt he was regarding me as a rather strange sort of Englishman who had blown into Poland with a mad scheme to save the world. But as we proceeded we understood each other more clearly. He is a soldier and has no delusions about war. He has clear and definite memories of the past and is firm in his determination to preserve law and order, like our own soldiers when called upon to deal with civil disorders. He is also equally strong that economic and other grievances must be dealt with. He has no faith in mere brute force as an alternative to justice, but considers this a job for the politicians. We had some discussion about the world economic conference and the proposed standstill agreement on armaments. I think he thought this might be possible of achievement, but he was also very sure that it would necessitate a good deal of discussion and organisation even if there were true goodwill all around. I think I gave him a great shock when as an alternative to war I said I would, if I had power, call upon all nations to assist in creating a large fund of a thousand million pounds for the purpose of European development. Like others he gently asked where it was to come from. I pointed out that in Europe alone we were spending fifty millions a day on war preparations and that much of this sum was raised by loan and the balance by taxation. Each nation could more easily raise its quota either by taxation or loan for constructive work. He was still rather sceptical and asked me who would

trust the poorer nations and would not the lenders say the risk was too great? My reply to the Marshal was the same as we had made to people in other countries "Thousands of millions of pounds sterling are easily raised for war which everyone agreed would be all loss. Therefore there should be much more readiness to lend money for international development." He was interested in my suggestion that a huge international loan should be raised, pooled, controlled, and utilised under international control. I fancy he saw many formidable difficulties in setting up the Commissioners, or perhaps in establishing a League of Nations on so secure a basis as would enable this to be done efficiently. I also think he understood more clearly than some my contention that Europe is dreadfully undeveloped. Her land in many districts is not at all effectively cultivated, and as to natural resources, minerals, coal, etc., no one could say that we even knew what there was in Eastern and Southern Europe ready for the service of man. We did not try to avoid the question of over-production. In this and other discussions I did my best to maintain the proposition that every man working on the land should be a customer for the all-round industrial market. I know, at the moment, as Colonel Beck has said at Geneva, that we must find territories to which people can migrate from Europe, especially from Poland. If they ever do emigrate, most of them will go straight to work upon the land. I am unable to understand that what is considered sound and profitable in Canada should be a hopeless failure in Europe. The final argument was if the world can be organised for slaughter, there is no sense or reason,

only colossal unreason, to say it is not possible to raise and administer a huge loan for constructive work, but possible to do so for destruction

At the close of this interview between a pacifist and a field marshal, I thought that if by some chance the chief soldiers, chief employers, and trade unionists were got together, the voice of reason might not only be heard, but also listened to, especially if, as I have already suggested, diplomats were given a chance to try their hand at some unrestricted talks. Nowhere in Poland did we hear a word of hatred against any nation or its rulers. There are great differences of opinion about many things, but after talking with this leading statesman and administrator, we thought it safe to say to pressmen "The Polish Government, minimising no internal difficulties or external dangers, is determined with all its power to pursue a policy of friendship with all and enmity with none. It quite understands that this must be reciprocal and strive to make it so."

We left Marshal Smigly Rydz and went on to meet Count Hutten Czapski. We discussed with him the problem of poverty in its relation to Gentiles and Jews, emigration, development of industrial and agricultural life, and what might be done through the League of Nations and International finance to assist these stricken parts of Europe to gain the means of life. In the chapter on Jews I have dealt with these subjects and shall come back to the question at the end of the book. Here it is only necessary to say that if there is one man in Poland desirous of finding speedy remedies both for the prevailing poverty and racial troubles in Poland, it is this Assistant

Minister for Home Affairs. We asked that arrangements might be made for us to visit one or two mixed schools (that is schools where Jews and Gentiles are educated together), and an entirely Jewish school. The arrangements were soon made and the next morning, accompanied by an interpreter from the British Legation and an Inspector of Schools, we were taken first to a mixed school. Jewish schools owe their existence to Jews insisting on Sabbath observance. We asked how this mixed school was possible. The explanation seemed to be that children of parents, whether Jew or Gentile, employed in Government or Municipal work, attended here. I did not understand how it was possible to observe the Jewish Sabbath here and not in the poorer schools. The school building was a very fine one and had good provision for swimming, an excellent gymnasium and good workrooms, concert hall and dining room, cookery and laundry centres. It was as good a school as I have seen anywhere, so far as accommodation and equipment were concerned. My only regret was that it was not built in the bungalow style. I disliked the stairs. The children were nicely dressed, appeared to be in good health, and were certainly in good spirits, judging from the uproarious welcome they gave us. We saw a gymnastic display by the girls, and heard some singing. Henry Carter, who was with me on this trip, and I, addressed the children through our interpreter. I spoke to them as I had spoken to the children in Rome—I gave them love from the children of Britain and explained that all children have one common Father, that all must grow up to love and help each other, that nobody was perfect,

that we were all equal in that respect. Of course we praised their drill and gymnastics and the rest of the school. The headmistress and her staff seemed to us to make no discrimination between Jew and Gentile, and the children walked about together and as far as we could judge sat together. But this was only an elementary school and perhaps among the upper and middle classes the racial prejudice is not so strong, seeing that the parents of these children have nearly all reached the earthly paradise of government or municipal service.

We followed up this visit with a drive into the poor section of the town. Poor it may be, but the streets were very wide. There have been great extensions of the city and much slum clearance. It is wonderful how much slum clearance and street widening has taken place within these cities in Central and South Eastern Europe in spite of the poverty one sees all around. As we drove along we passed into the heart of Jewry and were struck by the familiar appearance of the stalls and shops. We could see that it was a poor district as we looked at the people. Here, as in other towns, were thousands of Christmas trees, for Christmas is a festival throughout Poland. We reached the school rather late because our taxi driver, who could beat a Paris taxi driver at fierce and fast driving over bad roads, did not know his way. There were actually two schools here side by side, one for Gentiles and one for Jews, but all the children will be Polish citizens when they grow to be men and women. We chose the Jewish schools as we had not time to visit both. Like its neighbour it cares for seven hundred children of all ages up to about fifteen. The children were much poorer than those in the

Gentile school we had just visited. Their clothing and physique were on a level with many of our children in the districts where unemployment, low wages, and casual labour prevail. In spite of this they were buoyant and cheerful, chattering together in corridors and in the school dining room where a dinner to the poorest was being served. The last time I had seen one of these communal dinner parties was in Burnley, Lancashire, and I could not find much difference between the two meals.

Children are much alike everywhere. Perhaps the Jewish children are a little less boisterous. Some of those we saw in Poland, especially those over ten years of age, appeared when in repose to be rather more anxious looking and sad than is the natural attitude of children. When Henry Carter and I said a few words to them they brightened up, especially when we told them we came from London where a great many Jewish children lived and were happy because Jews and Gentiles lived together as boys and girls and thought of each other as children of one Father. An accordion band, composed of girls from about thirteen to fifteen years of age, entertained us to some music, accompanied by a piano. I felt very deep regret that the children of any nation or race should be brought up segregated from each other. There may be difficulties connected with the Jewish Sabbath because Polish State schools are opened six days a week, but this difficulty cannot be insuperable. It is impossible that children brought up in this way can meet together as an integral part of the community. They start their lives as separate races, Poles and Jews, and this is kept up through the universities. As we listened

to the music and singing, and watched the physical drill, etc., in both schools we were rather depressed because we remembered the terrible economic future which seemed, at the moment, to be in store for them, perhaps to be in some ways worse for these Jewish children than others because of the accident of their birth.

Our last interview before leaving to see the President at Spala was with the Prime Minister, Monsieur Slawoj-Sladkowski. This Minister has an ardent detestation of war and in principle is as pacifist as anybody I have met. There was not the slightest doubt that he had learned in the school of experience the folly and futility of war. He was quite unable to accept my view about unilateral disarmament and therefore supported the policy of arming his people for defence. One day light will dawn on the minds of nations and they will see that if in fact they are only arming for defence, there can be no necessity for arming at all. As is natural, the Prime Minister confirmed all we had heard from his colleagues about Poland's policy towards the League of Nations. He is an emphatic advocate of economic co-operation between Poland and her neighbours and hopes this will lead to European unity. He went into some detail on minorities. I will print some portions of what he repeated later in public on January 24th in Parliament.

"The Polish people should be fully aware that on their attitude to the national minorities depends to a great degree the future of Poland.

"The Polish people must take care that in its outward manifestations their attitude towards the minorities should always be worthy of the tradition and the spirit



of the nation. For this reason I regard any signs of hatred or impatience on the part of the Pole as a grove blunder, which sooner or later will have evil effects on Poland. I consider that it is unworthy of the Polish nation in its capacity as a majority, conscious of the part it plays within the State, to tolerate any incitement to suffocate or complicate the life of the minorities, not only because such activities are illegal, but also because we are all meant to live together and any incitement and movements of impatience would not fail to jeopardise our peaceful life together and Poland's cohesion. It would also be wrong to demand special rights for the Polish notional majority, as this would signify a lack of confidence in our own strength. This would be a cardinal mistake, which is bound to have all effects on the Polish people's psychology.

"Physical violence, which is conducive to anarchy in Poland, even if it is carried out as reprisals, even if it has been caused by momentary impatience, is most harmful, and lowers the moral standard of the Polish people.

"I shall now speak of what should be the attitude of the minorities to the country in which they exist. The minority should be loyal to the State, but this should not be a passive loyalty, nor a purely formalistic attitude. On the contrary, a minority, if it is loyally treated by the majority and the Government and, therefore, enjoys certain rights, should be fully aware of its duties. The minority should behave in such a way as to contribute in the same manner as the majority to the strengthening of the State in which it exists. This is the minority's duty of loyalty and a necessary condition for its members to enjoy full citizenship. If the members of the minority themselves limit their loyalty to a strictly formalistic attitude, they automatically place themselves in another, lower category of citizens, that of less useful and, therefore, undesirable citizens. In

this way between two different kinds of citizens must arise ill feeling and conflicts, which are a menace to the State

"What is the part the Government should play in such cases? The Government represents the interests of the State and must permanently remain above everyday conflicts, which are unavoidable between the different members of the majority and minorities. The Government must consider what are the long-range aims of the State, and act accordingly. They must create such conditions within the State, such a common weal, as to be able to couple all the strength of the majority with that of the minority, and direct it for the common good

"This is the basis on which, in my opinion, should be laid the relations between minorities and the majority in the State

"After this introduction, I wish to address in particular my colleagues, the Ukrainian representatives. As in my capacity as chief of the Government I am often hearing complaints about the unsatisfactory situation of the Ukrainian population, I must say that I prefer a well-to-do and satisfied Ukrainian to a hungry, destitute, and dissatisfied one. This is so simple a truth that everyone is bound to understand it at first glance. It is true that nationality problems have first of all a human aspect and no family has ever achieved anything through hatred, envy, and dispute over common family goods. Only common sense, only the knowledge that after all everyone has to live, and a feeling of equal needs, can create in a country with mixed population the necessary harmony essential to the life of a State. I must say in this place how dangerous it is for the minorities to manifest excessive impatience in striving for their rights. It is then that a lack of confidence arises between a majority and a minority. Looking straight into your eyes, Ukrainian colleagues, I declare

that in this moment the Ukrainian nation has no cause for impatience

"I state that the Ukrainian people when united with Poland are enjoying rapid cultural development. They also develop themselves economically in such a way that I would like to see the whole population of Poland achieve similar progress in that particular domain as that of Eastern Galicia. This is why I think it dangerous for the Ukrainians to hasten in an unhealthy way their development and to expect to change (in a few years) what has been distorted in the course of centuries.

"I will take, for example, a complaint which my Ukrainian colleagues favour, that censorship operates differently in Eastern Galicia from in Volhynia. This complaint is imaginary, because everybody knows that there are many Ukrainians who are Nationalist extremists in Eastern Galicia and who provide you, Gentlemen, with a great many difficulties, just as they do to us. The Government's duty is to prevent the extremists from penetrating into Volhynia. This is not trying to divide the Ukrainian people, as M. Celewicz contends, because I can assure you that I do exactly the same with the Poles. I do not allow in other parts of the borderland the writing of things that may very well be written and published in Warsaw. The reason for this is that the effect in that part of the country would be different. This discrimination has a reason, and it is not foul play with regard to the Ukrainian people, because it aims at suppressing an excessive militant nationalism, which is in this case just as pernicious as any other exaggerated nationalism.

I am now coming to the Jewish question. I know that the problems connected with this are very complicated, I am also aware that the competition with the Jew is not a racial fight. It is a consequence of overpopulation. It is a fight for a piece of bread. It springs from economic needs. The conflicts arising from the

Jewish question have, it is true, intensified in the last year, and caused a series of events which the Government strongly disapproves of, considering that each Polish citizen is entitled to a normal life. The Government has repressed, is repressing, and will always repress those misdeeds, in the interests of peace and justice in Poland.

"On the other hand, I observe with the Jews a tendency to ignore facts. Poland is being the field of social and economic transformation, which would also take place just the same if there had not been any Jews in Poland. I have in mind the improvement of the Polish peasant's standard of life, through his rush to the towns. These economic transformations must not be hindered by the Government, but encouraged, as they are necessary for the higher economic development of the Polish nation. This is why the Jews must understand the situation and that economic competition with them is not a violation of their rights, nor an attack on them in their capacity of Polish citizens.

"That the Jewish population cannot understand it is extraordinary, as for many decades the Jewish papers called for an improvement in the standard of living of the Jews and intensification of Jewish economic life. That the Jewish population is irritated by the transformations which are taking place in the structure of the Polish people is obvious through a number of undesirable initiatives by foreign Jews in our internal economic and social problems. This interference is often done in an aggressive and arrogant spirit and does not in any way contribute to quieten the Polish people and the Government. This is why I regard that kind of interference as an offence to the feelings of all citizens of the Polish State, Poles and Jews alike, and detrimental to the Jewish population.

"In the present situation I do not wish to propose any policy, because the shaping of such a policy will be

the outcome of everyday life of Poles, Ukrainians, and Jews, living and working together *I declare most categorically that the Polish Government wishes to continue to treat the minorities with benevolence on the basis of equal rights for all citizens and the maintenance of public peace*"

There is nothing to add to this statement, which puts quite clearly the policy of the Polish Government towards minorities. We parted with some hope that a big effort was being made to damp down the fires of racial hatred, and also with a growing conviction that neither in Poland nor anywhere else would social peace come until means are found to enable the bread problem to be solved in such a manner as will enable men and their wives and families to be fed.

On Wednesday afternoon we motored to Spala to see the President, Monsieur Ignacy Moscicki. We drove for nearly two and a half hours through rather flat country, passing through small villages and townships. The President's house was formerly a hunting lodge for royal holidays, and in the hall and along the corridors were hung the heads of animals shot by Czars, Emperors, Grand Dukes, and others—for the pleasure of shooting. It is now occupied by the distinguished scientist who has been elected President of the Polish Republic in place of the late Marshal Pilsudski. We were received by officers and servants in an atmosphere similar to that of any English country house, the difference being the presence of a bare handful of soldiers and possibly some secret police. On these visits I am constantly reminded that the old fashioned autocracy as represented by princes,

bishops, kings, and emperors of that past has gone and that now we are witnessing the rise to power of men drawn from the masses and from all professions J Ramsay MacDonald, a scholar born and brought up as a Scottish laddie in a village, his colleague, Arthur Henderson was an apprenticed iron moulder, Herr Hitler was a house-painter, Benito Mussolini a blacksmith's son, and thus President of the Polish Republic, Monsieur I Moscicki, is a distinguished scientist As we drove along from Warsaw I constantly asked myself "Is this change one of persons and machinery and form only, or does it go down much deeper and are we nearer the establishment of true democracy?" This interview brought some answer to these questions The President in some ways is like our King, expected to be above the battle which contending parties wage against each other He is, however, clearly and definitely possessed of powers which under certain conditions of national emergency he is able to use There could be no doubt that the President was well acquainted with everything concerning both national and international affairs However, the meeting was chiefly a social one and we talked extensively about all sorts of questions The President was recovering from a rather serious illness, but on this afternoon he appeared to be quite well and made our visit a very pleasant one

This was our last interview An official *communiqué* was issued describing our visit, running as follows

"Mr George Lansbury, the Rev Henry Carter, and Mr P W Bartlett were received yesterday by His Excellency Marshal Edward Smigly-Rydz, Inspector General of the Defence Forces, His Excellency General

Felician Slawoj Sladkowski, Primo Minister, and His Excellency Colonel Joseph Beck, Minister of Foreign Affairs

"Mr Lansbury asked support for a proposal that an approach might be made to the problem of general appeasement through an attempt to build up economic justice between the nations. The Polish statesmen agreed that an economic conference, provided that it was properly prepared for, was strongly to be desired. M Van Zeeland's expected report on his recent enquiries would, they declared, receive the fullest consideration in Warsaw. The policy of the Polish Government was to co-operate in a friendly manner with all other nations for the development of their mutual interests, and the conclusion of bilateral agreements with Poland's neighbours was a contribution to a general settlement. The difficult question of the future of the League of Nations was discussed. Strong emphasis was laid on the importance of a concentration in an international conference on industrial, social, cultural, and humanitarian activities as contributing to the solution of the problem of peace. Other matters discussed in a frank and friendly manner were the Jewish question, the question of migration, the minorities question and freedom of religious worship.

Just before their departure Mr Lansbury and his friends were received in audience at his residence at Spala by His Excellency the President of the Polish Republic, M Ignacy Moscicki."

## *Chapter X*

### VIENNA

OUR journey from Warsaw to Vienna was mercifully a short one. We arrived tired and hungry somewhere near 7 a.m. on Thursday, December 16th, and were met by the British Chargé d'Affaires, Mr W. H. B. Mack, and a representative of the Austrian Foreign Office, both of whom gave us a cordial welcome.

We started work at 9 a.m. and went on continuously until late in the evening. During the day we met representative men and women of the Society of Friends, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the War Resisters International, and other peace and religious organisations. These peace societies were allowed to carry on their work for peace quite openly. I met among the pressmen a Dr Scheu, and found he was grandson of the late Andreas Scheu who many years ago was an exile in London and one of the fiercest members of the old Social Democratic Federation. This meeting brought back to me memories of happy, strenuous days when, with hundreds of other East End young people, my wife and I spent happy hours listening to William Morris, H. M. Hyndman, Peter Kropotkin, and others telling us of the new social life.



that was to be. Much has happened to perplex and disturb the faith and vision of those days. Vienna, Warsaw, Prague, Rome, and Berlin have done much to make anybody who lived through the years from 1880 until now become full of doubts and fears. But when I have met foreign comrades and realised their courage in face of difficulties and trials—difficulties which men like myself have never endured—my faith is reinforced and I feel sure that somewhere and some time the harvest will be reaped. In Vienna, where, since I left, conditions have suddenly worsened, nevertheless I think the men and women who have struggled for the victory of reason will win in the end.

Our first ministerial engagement was fulfilled at 11 a.m. We drove to the Foreign Office and during the drive I had a glimpse of the splendid buildings and spacious streets of this great city. Vienna was a silent memorial and reproach to the stupid folly of allied statesmen who framed the Peace Treaty. Before the war it was the capital city of Austria Hungary which then contained a population of fifty million people. The truncated Austria which the Allies left as the Republic consisted of less than six million people, two million of whom lived in Vienna. Is it to be wondered at that the Austrians described their country as a "body with a heart but no arms, legs, or head"? No provisions of any effective kind were made to preserve economic unity over the whole of the Danubian Basin, although that would have been perfectly easy at the time. The population of the truncated remains of Austria was deeply divided among itself, but there seemed then to be a general belief

in the integrity and independence of the Austrian Republic

I had read schemes for the establishment in Vienna of a centre representative of all European States, a centre where economic and cultural questions could be discussed but not settled, leaving the Governments to decide their own policy, as is the case now

Nobody we visited thought it would be possible without another war to alter the present political boundaries, but most ordinary non official people we met seemed to think that Vienna could be preserved and treated as a great European centre. They considered that the time had come for much more consultation and collaboration between peoples, not only on questions connected with economics and public policy, but on all questions concerning the life of nations. These people were not at all disposed to throw over the League of Nations as a body representative of all the nations of the world, they hoped that the European nations would form a United States of Europe and the other continents unite in a similar manner. It would certainly have been magnificent to see a new Congress of Vienna which should bring back some comfort and peace to South eastern Europe. I hope the project can yet be taken up again

Our first interview was with Dr Schmidt, who in many ways reminded me of the Czech President, Dr Benes, especially in his knowledge of foreign politics. We discussed the question of prisoners, and Dr Schmidt was able to clear up some misconceptions which were shown in some letters which had appeared in British papers over my own and other signatures concerning political and other

prisoners in Austria. Our chief discussions however were concerning the proposals for a new economic conference and the coming Van Zeeland report. Dr. Schmidt's answer to our questions and discussion was very simple. Austria, he said, needed more trade and was already doing her utmost to establish friendly co-operation with her neighbours, great and small. I do not think he had much faith in my new conference unless statesmen come together with a genuine intention to make real progress. The Van Zeeland report would of course receive full and sympathetic consideration. We discussed other questions but none were so important as this one of economic appeasement. We were only able to meet Dr. Schmidt on this occasion as he left Vienna immediately after our interview.

My interview with the Chancellor, Dr. Kurt Schuschnigg, took place on Saturday at 11 o'clock. He received me in his room in the Viennese equivalent of 10 Downing Street, which is a much more palatial building. I had never previously met the Chancellor but had read a good deal about him, mostly unfavourable. The impression left on me after a fairly long and very frank exchange of views is that, in ways which he honestly believed were best, he was doing all in his power to bring unity among the people of Austria. Under his regime there was only one legal political party, a "Fatherland Front", which allowed no propaganda for Socialism or anything else which might destroy what was described as the unity of the people. This is not our conception of democracy but I did not go to Vienna to discuss these matters with members of the Government. All I can report about the Chancellor

concerns his reception of myself and his willingness to listen and reply in a straight, clear manner to the questions put to him. He was most painstaking in trying to understand me and as definite as possible in his replies.

My main business with the Chancellor after discussing the same questions that I had discussed with Dr. Schmidt, and receiving much the same answers, was connected with political prisoners, and though I am writing in another place about prisoners in general, I must deal with Austrian prisoners here. The British Trade Unionists and the Labour Party have been and are interested in all questions concerning Austria. As elsewhere we dislike certain forms of government intensely, but recognise that these can only be changed by the nations themselves. We have a traditional sympathy with nations struggling to be free, and when we are charged with what our own Government has done wrong or is still doing wrong to subject races under British rule, we are able to say that British workers are always eager to disown such conduct and do their best to change the policy. I do not think the Austrian Chancellor or any member of his Government resented our interest in political prisoners in Austria. They expected us to understand the conditions under which the Government was carried on and to accept the fact that the Government of Austria was responsible not to people outside Austria but to its own nation. For myself, I have tried to respect this point of view, but sometimes, because of other circumstances, I have not always been able to refrain from what must appear like interference. During this discussion and some others I have had in London on the same

subject, I have often wondered what our Secretary of State for India would say if a deputation of French Socialists asked for an interview in order to protest against the imprisonment of Indian political prisoners in the Andaman Islands, or the locking up of political prisoners without trial. The Chancellor listened to me very patiently while I tried to make my case on behalf of the dependants of political prisoners and, after hearing what I had to say, he agreed that if proper arrangements for the collection of funds and disbursement of these funds could be made, a concession would be granted.

On the strength of this promise Percy Bartlett made an appeal to the London Committee of the Society of Friends on our return, and as a result Mr Corder Catchpole went to Vienna to place a scheme before the Chancellor which he approved. Later it was approved by the Chief of Police. If this scheme is allowed to continue under the new regime, as I hope it may be, the wives and dependants of political prisoners will be benefited. I asked the Chancellor whether any prisoners would be released at Christmas. The answer was "yes", and I have heard since that a number were released. There were other questions concerning prisoners which were dealt with satisfactorily.

To those who live in Britain these may sound small matters to be concerned with. They were, however, of tremendous importance in a country like Austria. They have to be in every country where the Government does not have the whole-hearted support of the masses of the people, and would only have become possible when full democratic rights are restored and coercion

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is no longer the law of the land, in Austria as much as anywhere else.

I have purposely shortened my report of both these interviews because I am aware that whatever steps the Chancellor and his Government were taking to return to democracy and win the support of every section of the people are now a matter of history and one which, for many years, is best not discussed in full.

I heard no word of hate from anybody in Austria, only a very earnest desire for peace. No nation needed disarmament and peace more than Austria; no statesmen knew better than these Austrians what the horrors of war meant. When later I saw the President of the Republic, M. Miklas, for a short interview I heard the same kind of talk. Austrians had no love of war, their one object was to make the best they could of the conditions imposed on them by the triumphant Allies. I left the President and his Ministers earnestly wishing it were possible to bring M. Clemenceau, General Foch, and Dr. Wilson back from the place to which they have gone, and together with Lloyd George, Robert Cecil, and Colonel House take them through Europe from Danzig to Vienna, from Vienna to Greece, and let them see and understand what their disastrous Peace Treaties have meant to millions of people. Those who from whatever motive imposed these conditions on the defeated nations must between them share the responsibility for the plight Europe and the world is in to day, and any consequences which may follow. But it is not they who pay the penalty: that is paid by harmless and wholly innocent people, many of whom were only children when the war was



fought. Let us hope the younger statesmen I have met are wiser. Will Herr Hitler, Mr Chamberlain, Joseph Stalin, President Roosevelt, Signor Mussolini, M Blum, even now learn the simple lesson that war breeds war and that peace is only possible if nations and individuals are willing to "Do to others as they would be done unto"?

We spent a good deal of time seeing groups of our comrades and friends. At one meeting at the Friends Social Centre we were able to make speeches as freely as if we were in London, and our friends discussed with us the possibility of our proposal to bring about permanent peace through the establishment of economic justice. Some of our Christian comrades thought this impossible without a change of heart. I agreed, but pointed out that we have to show people why they should change their mode of thinking and their way of life, and how their fellow men would be able to understand the change through action. We also attended a children's Christmas party where toys from a large tree were distributed, toys which had been provided mainly by English and American friends. I found these social gatherings gave some relief from the harder and sterner conditions attaching to our visit.

We were also entertained to lunch by Mr Meisl, an important merchant in Vienna who also acts as Danish Consul General. He is a constant visitor to London and extremely well informed concerning British and foreign politics. We took a long time over our lunch because we plunged into a friendly but very intense discussion on how the affairs of Europe and the world could be straightened

out In the end we found ourselves in agreement as to the fundamentals and in disagreement about methods. On the same day, Friday, December 18th, I gave an address at a meeting of the Kulturbund, which I am printing as an appendix because I think it is the best summary of the message I have been delivering. Mr. Meinel presided over the meeting, which was a very large and representative one, including many members of the Diplomatic corps and some Ministers representing the Government. After the lecture there was a supper party which lasted for some time, then more discussion concerning pacifism. When it was all over I confess I was extremely tired and glad to go back to the hotel to bed. On Saturday I was up very early to enable myself to get a glimpse of the Socialist municipal houses. It was a very rushed visit and I was only able to get a very cursory sight of those fine flats, on the walls of some of which remain scars recording the bombardment of 1934. I do not think the actual accommodation inside the flat I saw was much superior, if at all, to those we erect in Poplar, but the amenities such as laundries, meeting places, etc., are better, and so also were the splendid open spaces around which the buildings are grouped. In the evening I spent a couple of hours with Comrade Seitz, the Burgomaster, or Mayor, of Vienna who was turned out of office after the Dollfuss *coup d'état* in 1934. He was in good health and spirits, and though prevented from taking his old active part in public affairs, he is still very highly respected and if conditions changed would be welcomed back as a municipal officer by his friends and neighbours.

I cannot close this chapter without recording the thanks

of my friends and myself for all the courtesy and kindness we received from the President and his Ministers and for the complete freedom with which they allowed us to carry our pacifist message to various gatherings, and also for their willingness to listen to our appeals on behalf of prisoners and the re-establishment of trade union organisations and political freedom on lines similar to that we enjoy in Britain. We also received considerable help from Madame Jacoby, the secretary of the Kulturbund, who<sup>1</sup> assisted us to understand the working of the then Constitution and also saved us much time and trouble in making arrangements for us to see people. Neither must we forget to express our thanks to the pressmen and women of Vienna, who provided us with one of the biggest and most understanding of our press conferences. We had had full discussions in Prague and Warsaw. In Vienna I went through a positive Scottish heckling from men and women representing papers of every variety of opinion from Fascist to Communist. What they reported about me I cannot say, but it is certain they gave my visits a true international report. I have discovered that journalists are much the same everywhere: they know how to reduce the business of getting news to a fine art. They are like a King's Counsel examining a reluctant witness, they suggest the answer they desire through the questions they put. However, I am grateful to them for all the publicity they gave our work in whatever place we found ourselves.

Finally, I would like all who read this book to catch a little of the spirit and work of the Society of Friends, work which goes on almost silently from one year's end

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to the other in every part of the world wherever there is sorrow, suffering, disease, and death. I heard of it in Germany, Switzerland, and France in 1918-19, in Russia in 1920 and 1926, and now, wherever I have been in Europe, Governments so dissimilar as the Soviet Government of Russia, the Nazi Government of Germany recognise their work and their worth. In Vienna for the first time I came right up against it at close quarters and learnt at first hand how much these quiet unassuming people are able to do when all others seem doomed to fail. I can never understand why or how some of them, not all by any means, seem able to accumulate wealth. I do, however, understand why it is all sorts and conditions of men and women rise up and bless them. And so in closing this chapter I wish to thank Mrs Emma Cadbury and her friends and everyone else in the peace and war resisters movement who helped to make our stay a happy one and our work as easy and efficient as possible.

Most of this chapter now seems unreal, and written about a vanished city. But while I regret as much as anyone what has happened, I must remind British and American readers that it was the direct result of the Versailles Treaty. Had Germany and Austria been permitted to follow their own desires in 1919 they would have then joined in a free union, which would have saved great unnecessary suffering. But the treaty forbade it and France and Britain upheld the ban, and now the union has been completed by violence and in defiance of them.

## *Chapter XI*

### THE JEWS

THERE cannot be peace in the world until there is in all nations the willingness to acknowledge equal rights for all people irrespective of race, colour, or creed. No nation possesses such superior knowledge and wisdom as to give it the right to claim special privileges at the expense of the moral and material rights of others. Here in East London where I live, the relatively big Jewish population lives side by side with the rest of us, sharing social, political, and industrial life. Occasionally we disagree, not because we are Jews and Gentiles but simply because we are equal citizens and find ourselves differing in our views on social and political questions. In Poplar, even if the disease has appeared in other boroughs, there is very little feeling of racial superiority or inferiority.

I say these things as a preface to what I have to say concerning Jewish problems in Europe. I do not imagine it is possible for any person living in a country such as ours to understand in all its cruel horror the ordinary life which in Europe is the lot of millions of Jews. The destitution is terrible, when this is coupled with persecutions and murder life becomes almost unbearable. There

is no excuse or explanation which can excuse such conditions. I am certain they will not last, but meanwhile this crusade of ruthless persecution is bringing every kind of suffering and loss to all classes of Jewish people. The New German Aryan race theory, which has no basis in fact, has accentuated an age long bitterness not merely in Germany, but in Poland and elsewhere in Central and South East Europe. The attitude of the Polish Government is among the most important. Here a great responsibility rests on Count Emeric Hutten Czapski, who is the Minister in charge of emigration. Together with my colleagues I spent a considerable time discussing the Jewish problem with him. He was quite frank and open concerning the attitude of the Gentile Polish people towards the Jews, but I did not detect in him personally any racial animosity such as I have seen in diplomats of other countries. He claimed that the question was one of economics and took the view that there are too many people in Poland, Gentiles as well as Jews. He repeated his general argument later in a speech in Parliament in December, 1937, from which I take the following extracts:

‘ And now the Jewish problem. This is, to-day, the outstanding problem of Polish politics. It is made still more acute by the fact that the national movement is becoming stronger and stronger, and that there exists in the country an over-population, an excess of Polish and other forces tending towards cities and towns. It is quite obvious that, as things are, when the population increases and the tendency to obtain employment in commerce, industry and craft is rising, Jewish and non-Jewish elements are brought into direct contact. Considering the fact that, in 1929, there were

in Poland 78,000 Jewish craftsmen against the total number of 200,000 craftsmen, and further that in 1933, 200,000 industrial certificates against the total number of 400,000 certificates have been delivered to Jews, considering too, the fact that in the medical profession there are in Poland 35 per cent of Jews, why should it seem strange to us that the crisis, financial and economic difficulties, and misery are often driving people to outbursts and acts of violence?

"What is the standpoint of the Jewish population? I am under the impression that Herzl's idea of a Jewish National Home, especially of Palestine, this idea having had a great development, is not very much remote from the actual tendencies of the Polish Jews. And I think that the number of those Polish citizens willing to leave for Palestine or America must be quite important. I think that it is the duty of the Polish as well as of the Jewish people, to try to contribute their goodwill in order that these dissensions among the Poles and the Jews, and amongst non Poles of other Slavonic nationalities in Poland, should be brought to an end. This end should not take the form of riots and window-breaking, but that of a quite distinct change, of a peaceful and quiet emigration.



actions, that it is not its duty to think: 'And what then?' Yet, I do not know whether, besides the efforts carried on by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the efforts made by our Government towards a positive solution of the Jewish problem have been satisfactory. If in 1935, 24,500 Jews emigrated to Palestine, in the next few years the number of emigrants greatly decreased. While in 1936, from January to August 7th, 7,887 Jews left for Palestine, in 1937, from January 1st to August 1st, only 1,594 Jews emigrated. The anti-Semitic movement continues to be quite strong, and, in some places has brought quite positive economic results which are in accordance with the tendencies of the whole Polish nation. The Polish people, as well as the Jewish population, have got to find some solution. Well, I think that the Government as well as the whole Polish nation and the Jewish organisations should increase their efforts to the effect that the process of broadening of the platform of national economy by the Polish elements in Poland, a process which, of course, is quite a natural and healthy one, could be continued without shocks and frictions."

The meaning, in actual fact, of this hesitant policy, is commented on by the important Jewish paper *Nasz Przegląd* as follows:

"Members of the Diet, Hutten Czapski has adopted the well known thesis beginning with the over-population of the country and ending with emigration of Jewish masses from Poland. He did not introduce any new moments in this old tune. His speech, nevertheless, deserves attention because he himself is the leader of a special group created in the Diet for the study of colonisation and emigration problems.

'The marked inclination of some people to deal with emigration problems seems quite natural, especially at the

present moment, because a revision of the partition of the Colonies is being planned

"Should any colonial conference take place in the future Poland must take part in it. It is quite comprehensible, therefore, that a group of members of the Polish Parliament should try to be prepared in advance

"No wonder also that the same group would like to have members of the Jewish Parliamentary group join them in this mutual preparatory work. It might seem that no obstacles can prevent them from doing so, and of accepting an invitation, but, in fact, there are two things which stand in the way

"First of all, the Polish group considers the Jewish emigration problem as strictly connected with the expulsion of the Jews from their economic posts all over the country

"The second obstacle consists in the very atmosphere created in Poland around the Jews and the Jewish problem

"As long as Congresses of Merchants in Poland adopt anti Jewish resolutions, as long as associations of lawyers and surgeons bring up discussion over 'Aryan' conditions of admission, as long as the martyrology of the Jewish University continues, as long as the policy of 'yes, but' does not cease and the pickets at the entrance to Jewish shops are not chased away—the Jewish members of the Diet can take no part in any conversations over emigration or colonial problems. And that is a pity

"If normal conditions of existence were assured for the Jews in Poland they would find real profit in the examination of the above problems

"They would invest in it not only their great experience, but they would also provide for first class pioneers in the acquisition of territories for the colonisation for the Polish Republic "

I have no intention of palliating any of these excesses. All I wish to do is to call attention to the acuteness of the Polish problem. The number of Jews in Poland, a small, thinly populated and poor country, is really astonishing, and makes the question far different from any problems we may have here at home. The following figures were given to me and are very significant.

**DISTRIBUTION OF THE JEWISH POPULATION IN THE WORLD  
AND IN POLAND IN 1935**

(After Wellisch)

		Per cent
Total number of Jews in the world	16,000,000	100 00
Out of which in Europe	10,000,000	62 50
"    "    U S A	4,200,000	26 25
"    "    Poland	3,400,000	21 50
"    "    Russia	2,860,000	17 88
"    "    Germany	500,000	3 15
"    "    Great Britain and Ireland	597,000	2 48
"    "    Roumania	829,000	5 18
"    "    Palestine	365,000	2 28

**PER CENT OF JEWISH POPULATION IN SOME COUNTRIES  
IN 1935**

(After Wellisch)

Palestine	30 12
Poland	10 37
Hungary	5 11
Roumania	4 61
U S A	5 41
Great Britain and Ireland	0 80
Germany	0 75
France	0 18

PER CENT OF JEWISH POPULATION IN DIFFERENT PROFESSIONS AS COMPARED WITH THE GENERAL NUMBER OF PERSONS EMPLOYED IN THESE PROFESSIONS IN 1931

(Data supplied by the Chief Bureau of Statistics and by Dr Tartakowa's book *Jews in Modern Poland*)

Commerce and Insurance	62 6
Industries and Mining	23 5
Communications and Transport	10 2
Agriculture	0 9
Professions	12 4

PER CENT OF JEWS IN MEDICINE AND LAW (EXCLUDING THREE VOYVODSHIPS OF THE FORMER GERMAN PART OF POLAND)

Physicians in 1931 according to the lists published by the "Dr Marcinkowski's Physicians Society in Warsaw"	35 2
Lawyers in the years 1930-32 according to Dr Komarnicki	37 0

POPULATION OF THE CITIES IN POLAND HAVING THE GREATEST NUMBER OF JEWS IN 1931 (Economic and statistical bulletin—date and figures concerning the life of Jewish population in Poland, January, 1937)

	Total number of inhabitants	Jews	Per cent of Jewish Population
Warsaw	1,171,698	553,659	30 1
Łódź	604,629	202,487	23 5
Lwów	312,231	99,595	31 9

	Total number of inhabitants	Jews	Per cent of Jewish Population
Krakow	219,286	56,515	25 8
Wilno	195,071	55,006	28 2
Brilystok	91,101	39,165	43 0
Lublin	112,285	58,937	54 7
Czestochowa	117,179	26,588	21 9
Radom	77,902	25,159	32 5
Stanislawów	59,960	24,823	41 4

Some of these figure are not up-to date, but the changes are not important. It would not be difficult to dispose of a total of sixteen million people in the world if common sense were given a chance. The establishment of a Jewish national home or state in Palestine under a mandate from the League of Nations entrusted to Great Britain has been very successful in proving that Jews are good agriculturists and as willing to do pioneer and manual labour as any other race. But there are also very great difficulties. No one who has not taken part in the most thorough investigations into Palestine affairs is able to express a worthwhile opinion concerning how to overcome those difficulties which have brought immigration into Palestine almost to a standstill. I can only say that everywhere we went and everybody with whom we talked was not merely depressed, but shocked by the fact that neither the Mandates Commission, Lord Peel's Commission appointed by the British Government to find a solution, or the British Colonial Office had been able to do anything more than (as it is put by many speakers) "sterilise" immigration into Palestine. This question has been raised at the

Assembly of the League of Nations by Colonel Beck, the Polish Foreign Secretary on September 14th, who urged the necessity for speedy and effective action not only to deal with the Jewish question but the much bigger question of all surplus populations. At this session the comment of the Mandates Commission on the British action was quoted

"In connection with the examination of the annual report for 1936, the Commission notes the mandatory Power's decision to reduce Jewish immigration temporarily as from August 1st, 1937, to 8,000 persons for the next eight months. The Commission does not question that the mandatory Power, responsible as it is for maintenance of order in the territory, may on occasion find it advisable to take such a step, and is competent to do so, as an exceptional and provisional measure, it feels, however, bound to draw attention to this departure from the principle, sanctioned by the League Council, that immigration is to be proportionate to the country's economic absorptive capacity."

Mr Lange (Norway) observed that "It was obvious that to reduce the territory of the Jewish home would very adversely affect the possibilities for immigration in the future, as absorptive capacity was necessarily determined by the extent of the territory." The representative of Haiti had at an earlier session proposed a declaration of equality of rights to prevent peoples from being subjected to special discrimination. After several days' discussion, during which the proposal was supported by, among others, the United Kingdom and French representatives, the Sixth Committee had asked the Powers which had

not subscribed to the declarations on minorities which States entering the League of Nations were asked to make, to apply this minimum of rights to all populations, irrespective of religion or race. That proposal (he now pointed out) had clearly not been applied, and that was the source of difficulties. Palestine could not absorb all the Jews who were fleeing from persecution, for the Arabs did not want to be dispossessed.

The problem would therefore have to be put on a broader basis and a status found for Jews throughout the world. If that was not done, it would be impossible to solve the problem of Palestine.

Then came a speech from the Polish representative, Mr. Komarnicki, from which I print fuller extracts.

"It was certain that the Balfour Declaration could only have been conceived in view of the existence for centuries past of a Jewish problem. Moreover, the increasing tendency observable during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, particularly among the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe, to lay the territorial foundation of an independent national existence had certainly influenced the origin of that declaration.

"Such a tendency could not but be strengthened by the creation of a Palestine mandate, which aimed at setting up a Jewish National Home under the guarantee of the League of Nations. The realisation of that ideal had since become part and parcel of Jewish communal life the whole world over. The Zionist movement had made very great headway among the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe, who had preserved their national and cultural characteristics distinct from their environment.

"In those circumstances any modification in the legal

status of the Jewish National Home and any change in its possibilities of development must clearly have wide repercussions on the Jewish masses, for whom a final and permanent solution of the Jewish problem was of vital importance

M Komarmicki reminded the Committee that Jews had settled in large numbers in Poland ever since the fourteenth century. Many Jewish refugees expelled from England, France, Germany, Spain, and Portugal had found a home in Poland, where they could live their own economic and cultural life unhampered. At that time Poland was the only large European country from which Jews had never been expelled. In the nineteenth century Poland again became a place of refuge for the Jews who had been deported from Central Russia by the Czarist Government and had come to settle in Polish territory.

"In the course of centuries the Jewish population developed a special social and professional structure, the features of which were its concentration in cities and its practice of certain professions. As he had already pointed out, the Jews formed 10 per cent of the total population of Poland, but they formed nearly 30 per cent of the urban population, and in some of the eastern wojewodeships almost 50 per cent of the urban population were Jews.

"As soon as an agricultural country like Poland showed signs of being overpopulated in the country-side, as soon as the rural population tried to divert to the towns the surplus of its members who sought to give their social existence a fresh economic basis by entering the urban professions, it was inevitable that the anomalous features in the social structure of Jewry would make themselves more acutely felt in the movements of social life.

"The unfavourable consequences of the professional structure of Polish Jewry had become evident in Poland



in the pre-war period. Emigration was at that time the method which enabled this disproportion to be gradually reduced by the normal evolution of economic law. This emigration, obviously, included both the surplus of the non-Jewish rural population and part of the Jewish urban population. Between 1900 and 1914, 65,000 Jews annually left Polish territory for foreign countries. That figure was twice the annual increase in the Jewish population of Poland, so that Jewish emigration tended to diminish the numbers of Jews in Poland.

"After the war, migration had stopped but at the same time the world agricultural depression had driven the rural population into urban professions, and that fact had immediately had an aversive effect on the situation of the Jewish population.

"Simultaneously the agricultural depression had lowered very considerably the purchasing power of the country-side which was the basis of the economic existence of the Jews living in the small towns. The resultant impoverishment of the Jewish masses had increased their desire to emigrate.

"Since the closing of overseas countries to immigration Jewish emigration naturally tended to flow more especially to Palestine. The Jewish National Home had, therefore, become for a large proportion of European Jews not only a spiritual and political pole of attraction but also an economic centre destined to welcome at least some of the Jews whose economic existence in the various countries did not seem adequately guaranteed under existing conditions.

"The circumstances to which he referred were particularly acute in Poland but were also a feature of the economic situation of the Jews in other central and eastern European countries. In his statement made to the Royal Commission of Enquiry, Dr. Wieszman, President of the World Zionist Organisation, had

reckoned at six millions the number of Jews in Central and Eastern Europe whose economic circumstances were unsatisfactory. At the Jewish World Congress which met at Geneva in August 1936, the number of Jews in various countries who would have to emigrate annually was estimated at 200,000, including 100,000 from Poland.

"In these circumstances the Polish Government considered that the Jewish National Home should not only give the Jewish nation a basis for its spiritual and political life but should also not belie the hopes which a large part of the Jewish community living in the Diaspora when the mandate was introduced had placed in the application of the principles of the Balfour Declaration.

"In other words, this Jewish National Home should constitute for the masses of Jewry, and not only for a chosen few, a basis on which they could build a durable national economic existence. To enable such conditions to be realised this Home should be capable of welcoming within its frontiers a considerable part of the Jewish population whose economic existence could at present be assured only by emigration. In that way it might be possible to solve, at least partly, the great problem of the Jews in the Diaspora.

"It was from that standpoint that the Polish Government would examine any scheme for changing the status of Palestine which might in future be presented by the United Kingdom Government. In taking up that attitude the Polish Government fully endorsed the conclusions of the Mandates Commission's Report regarding the territorial basis to be given to the Jewish National Home, more particularly the following conclusion

"The areas allotted to the Jews should be sufficiently extensive, fertile, and well situated from

the point of view of communications by sea and land to be capable of intensive economic development and consequently of dense and rapid settlement' "

These speeches show clearly the terrible urgency of the question and the difficulties with which statesmen are faced in South, East, and Middle Europe. The last few sentences of the speech of Mr Frangulis, the Haiti representative, tell very clearly the spirit with which all Jewish and racial questions must be dealt. We must all unite in saying without reservation that Jews the world over must be treated on an equal status with all others. I would extend this and say we must adopt the principle embodied in the American Constitution—that all people are born equal.

Since our return from Poland many people have asked us what should be done to solve this problem. It is not a question to be settled by Jews alone. We are all in it. Palestine will play a big part in the solution of the question, but any thought of sending all Jews to Palestine is obviously absurd. In my thought concerning Jews I hold one overriding opinion. Jews must have the same rights as other races enjoy to live where they please so long as they conform to the laws of the country in which they reside. I cannot understand how anybody knowing the history of the race can ever forget the great contributions to religion, culture, and life which Jews have made. I think at this moment there is one important thing which Christendom can do. We can insist that the present delays concerning Palestine be speedily ended. But we can do something more immediate. We can in the name of our common humanity call upon the British Dominions

and the United States to throw down all barriers and open wide the doors into their countries for Jews and Gentiles, and do it now. Monstrous sums are being spent in preparing for war and world suicide. Cannot those sympathetic with the poverty, destitution, and suffering of millions of people unite and demand that an international fund shall be raised to deal with this most urgent question? Money comes to us like magic for war. I want to suggest we raise money in the same way to enable those who desire to do so to remove out of their present squalid hopeless conditions into lands now unoccupied, and create new homes for themselves and others.

I do not ask for special places for Jews, except in Palestine. It is not segregation which will remove this persecution madness from the world. British and American people who dislike persecution and desire to help the victims should be among the first to find the place and the means by which this can be done.

I have something to say elsewhere on the general question of European economic development, here I am speaking of an immediate palliative. Madagascar or Ecuador may or may not be suitable for emigrants from Europe—I do not know, but I am certain about the British Dominions and the United States. All that is needed is organisation, money, and, most of all, determination to mix Jews and Gentiles on the basis of equality. This is no dream—it is practical and could be started at once. Every settler would of necessity become a customer and therefore a help to those already there. The whole of what we used to call the new world is suffering from lack

of enterprise, courage, and population. It is the merest nonsensical rubbish to speak of overcrowding in the lands I mention. There is unemployment and poverty, I know, but the causes are the same as here. Under any scheme with which I was connected I should start with one object, which would be to organise social and industrial effort for the use and service of each other. And remember, I ask for *this migration solely to ease the present terrible situation in Europe, and I ask it for Jew and Gentile*.

These lands need a new economy—that of co-operation. The British Dominions and the United States should examine their vital statistics and then consider the resources which lie untouched all around them, and ask themselves why there is poverty in lands of potential plenty. They will be bound to reply that it is not because there are too many people nor too much production, but that it is under consumption from which we suffer. What happens during a great war? All so-called political economy is blown sky high. All individual and national knowledge, health, and strength is organised and mobilised, towns are built, factories erected, land cultivated, all in order to destroy and smash what the toil of ages has created. If a great migration scheme were organised for Central and South Eastern Europe we could start a new world system of co-operative effort by studying what all Governments do when preparing for mass destruction.

## *Chapter XII*

### WITH THE WAR RESISTERS

ON July 21st, 1937, I found myself at Harwich on board a Danish boat bound for Esbjerg. This time I was one of a party of war resisters, headed by Lord Ponsonby, Runham Brown, Grace Beaton, Canon Morris, and others. Rudolph Messel was my companion, acting as usual as guide, protector, and friend. He and I occupied ourselves on the journey in playing chess, much to the amusement of more serious and skilled players who could not understand how we could talk and play at the same time. It was an extremely pleasant journey out to Denmark and back, the sea was like a pond with just a ripple of movement, and some sun. The voyage itself did us a great deal of good.

This time we were going to Copenhagen to take part in the Triennial Conference of the War Resisters' International. During 1936 I had accepted the office of chairman of this International in succession to Lord Ponsonby who retired from that position but remains a member of the Executive Committee. I consider my connection with this Conference and organisation as an integral

part of my work for peace. The International was formed over seventeen years ago and has now established groups in sixty-eight countries of the world. In many places the groups are small, but in many others the numbers are much larger. Here in Great Britain where there is no legal conscription there are nevertheless sometimes quite unpleasant difficulties manufactured for a young man of military age who has conscientious objections to war and cannot join the territorials or support cadet corps or boys brigades, which in one form or another help forward the principle of military service. But our position is quite easy compared with that endured by those who live in lands where compulsory military service is the law of the land, even in democratic countries refusal to serve means imprisonment, and in some others the prosecutions amount to persecution.

The object of the International is to bring a message of fraternity and goodwill to all those who suffer on these grounds, and to assure them they are not alone. I found it a very great experience to meet men and women from many lands who were able to tell us of the work they were trying to do, and also to speak of their successes. People who never know what it is to make a sacrifice for anything, lose a very great deal by not trying to understand that life means giving as well as taking. When I took even a small part in the discussions I felt quite small compared with those who face danger and difficulty every day of their lives. I think our brave comrades in prisons and camps must have been cheered and comforted in their loneliness when they heard of our Conference. On the occasion of both my visits the authorities and the press were very kind

indeed, and on this occasion our Conference was warmly welcomed throughout Denmark. I never remember greater publicity for a cause. It is true that Lord Ponsonby, Canon Morris, myself, and others came in for a good deal of attention, but it was the fact of the Conference itself and its aims and objects which drew most publicity.

The first meeting of the Conference was held in the Parliament House and translations of Ponsonby's speech and my own were broadcast. Who can imagine the authorities in London allowing a pacifist conference to be held in their famous House of Assembly—the House of Commons? But the Danes are very democratic in the fullest sense of the word. Although by their law men must at least give alternative service when conscripted, they are quite willing that their Parliament House should be the meeting place for those from all lands who refuse in any circumstances to take up arms against their fellow men. We were welcomed by representatives of the town, and after the first meeting were entertained by the Burgomaster in the Town Hall at a reception and dinner. Members of the Government were present, including Dr. Munch, the Foreign Minister, with whom I had a short conversation about my journey to America and my visit to Germany, and my proposed visit to Rome and South east Europe.

Thus Conference lasted three days and was a model of all a conference should be—not too formal, not altogether in agreement, but united in the bonds of international comradeship and complete opposition to violence and war. The final resolution defined the basis of membership as follows



"Assembled here at the close of the Fifth Triennial Conference of the War Resisters' International, we reaffirm our belief in our declaration and in the Statement of Principles of the International. We affirm again that the right way to oppose tyranny is not to kill the tyrant but to refuse to co-operate with him in his wrongdoing. Not only will we refuse to take up arms or to assist in the preparation for armed violence, but we dedicate ourselves anew to strive for the removal of economic and political barriers which make life intolerable for so many peoples, and to work for social justice and the abolition of all class distinctions, preparing ourselves to make whatever sacrifices are necessary for the establishment of a new order of society and more just relationships between nations."

While in Copenhagen we held a large mass meeting in one of the town's largest halls. Among the speakers were Lord Ponsonby, Canon Morris, and myself. The audience was a very enthusiastic one. We spent a further three days campaigning for peace, holding large mass meetings at Odense, Silkeborg, Skive, and Aarhus, a seaport town in Jutland. The halls in each case were crowded and the audience enthusiastic, especially at Aarhus where the meeting was organised by the Social Democratic Party. After each meeting we met for supper and continued our discussion until the early hours of the morning. It was a great experience meeting people face to face and realising that although we could not speak each other's language we could, with the help of Belgian, French, Dutch, and English interpreters, talk understandingly with each other. We believed that we were engaged in an enormous piece of constructive work, some, as indeed I was, were actuated by a conscious faith that we were being guided

by the Power in the universe which is to us God, others were equally zealous because their inspiration came to them through their reason. It was indeed a great experience to hear two women so dissimilar as a Jewish comrade, Rose Gutman from Palestine, and Ruth Fry of the English Quakers, each in her own way declaring the oneness of life and unifying power of brotherhood and service. I wish I could print a report of all the speeches because much clearer than any words of mine these would show how diverse ideas drive men and women to one conclusion when discussing peace and war. All I can do, however, in the space I have is to print, by kind permission of the speaker, the following abridged report of Lord Ponsonby's speech.

"On behalf of the War Resisters' International I desire to express our grateful thanks to our Danish Section for all the arrangements they have made to enable us to meet here in Copenhagen, the capital of a country which we regard as one of the most hopeful and advanced nations in a troubled world.

"I would extend greetings to the representatives we have here of twenty one nations. Our meetings and consultations together can do nothing but good. I am sure you will allow me to pick out for special greeting and congratulation our Spanish comrades. While their country is still torn by a terrible and cruel fratricidal conflict, while the lives of their fellow countrymen are being sacrificed or constantly in danger and their cities are being devastated, they have with remarkable courage and without betraying the convictions they hold in common with us, devoted their energies to alleviating the suffering of the civil population and saving more especially the children, as far as they possibly can, from the miseries and torture which civil war involves.

They give us a fine example of how war resisters should behave in face of hideous and uncontrollable outbreak of violence

"The War Resisters' International is, as you know, also carrying out to the best of its ability relief work in Spain, without neglecting our main work, and without forgetting those, nearly five hundred in number, who are being punished and imprisoned in Europe for their resistance to military service. In some cases we have been able to secure the release of such victims, or to give them help and encouragement

"This is not my first visit to Copenhagen. Nearly forty years ago I came here with my wife, a fortnight after our marriage, and I remained here as Secretary to the British Legation for two years. I have retained a happy and unfaded memory of those two years during which I learned something of the friendliness and efficiency and the high political, scientific, and artistic standard of the Danish people, and I was able from that time onward to recognise that size, power, and riches were, in nations as in individuals, no necessarily true sign of an enlightened civilisation

"I am afraid I have forgotten the little Danish I ever knew, although I can still read it. One short sentence, however, has remained in my memory—*Det er ikke sand*—it is not true,' a very useful phrase, and one that if you will allow me I will apply to some of the considerations which I will bring before you to-day

"*Det er ikke sand*—it is not true that armaments mean security

"While it would be an impertinence for me to discuss the disputes which have taken place in the Danish parliament during this century on the subject of armaments, I may say that Denmark has the reputation in the world of having attempted to advance closer to the idea of complete disarmament, so far as international war is concerned, than any other nation, I would add that the

first nation that disarms and refuses to participate in any international conflict will find that it has thereby obtained complete security. But more than that, it will have sent out a message to the nations of the world so well-founded both in morality and common sense, and so completely in accord with the wishes of the common people all the world over, that it is bound to have widespread influence in checking the possible destruction of modern civilisation, with which the piling up of armaments we see to-day constantly threatens us. This mistaken confidence in force with which the Governments of nations appear to be obsessed to-day is a legacy from the war of 1914-18, and it requires courage on the part of some statesman or nation to proclaim to the world that since violence is no cure for any evil, that since violence never solves any dispute, and that since violence sows the seeds of hatred and revenge, advance towards a better civilisation can only be pursued by refusing to yield to the temptation of joining with others in preparing for war, and by turning back from the downward path which leads to misery and chaos and taking the new path which leads to national well being and international conciliation.

"Det er ikke sand—it is not true that you can defend your people from the terrible destruction and ravages of modern warfare. It cannot be done, even if you have a superiority over the enemy in numbers and equipment. If your armaments are small they are worse than useless, because they only give the enemy the excuse for saying that just because you are armed you must be destroyed. But if a nation is unarmed, then I maintain that low as international morality may be there is no government which would attack a completely unarmed nation.

"Det er ikke sand—it is not true that you can crush Fascism, Communism, or any other creed by force of arms—any more than it was possible for the Allies and

Associated powers to crush German militarism in the war twenty years ago Ideas, if they are wrong, can only be crushed by allowing ideas which are right to prevail in the country itself

"Let me say here that while we detest some of the policies and ideas adopted by the Governments of several of the nations in the world to day, we have no quarrel with the peoples, and we should therefore waste less time in criticising and abusing the Governments and emphasising all things which they do that we think wrong, thereby increasing ill feeling Let us rather seize on every sign of friendliness and goodwill which any government or dictator may offer, and encourage a sympathy which will make them develop their policy along better lines

"Det er ikke sand—it is not true that the League of Nations, as at present constituted, can check an aggressor by force of arms without greatly extending the area of warfare The influence of the League can be greatly strengthened and its membership increased if its authority rests on a moral basis and the element of force is taken out of the Covenant altogether As long as it is the ultimate basis of League action, those who have the biggest armaments will dominate the League Wisdom, whether it comes from a big nation or a small nation, is of infinitely greater value for an international body whose main purpose is conciliation than any number of ships, guns, or aeroplanes

"To put it shortly, we in the War Resisters' International want the complete abolition of the thing we are resisting, namely, war We do not believe in any half way house, in proposals for limiting armaments or in trying to humanise the barbarities of modern warfare We do not want a crack of the door to be left open We want to bolt and bar the door against war as a method of attempting to settle international disputes

"We believe, therefore, not in accentuating differences of ideas and of governmental methods in various countries, but in co operation all together. We are convinced that by international Conference alone can such disputes as may exist be settled. Not after a bloody conflict, but before it can arise. We want our Governments to think less of thwarting, correcting, and punishing others and to concentrate more on conciliating, encouraging, and co operating with the better elements which exist in every nation. We have no use for threats. We know that the world cannot remain carved up as it is to day for all time. Necessary changes can be brought about by agreement, whereas changes effected by force must, as they have invariably in the past, sow the seeds of future conflict.

"I venture to think that more people agree with us now than ever before. Some may be frightened to say so because of the pressure of the old false form of patriotism. Others may find it still difficult to believe that you are safer unarmed than well armed. But all except a few madmen and profiteers are desperately anxious to avoid war. The conflict in Spain shows what terrible injury and destruction even very inferior equipment may inflict.

"We must continue to lead and show the way. Our position is based on the good that exists in mankind which we believe to be far stronger than the evil. To teach people to hate one another is a crime—a crime which the Governments of the nations are preparing to commit again to day.

"Let us stand out. In every country the peoples are yearning for permanent peace. We are voicing their view, and by our deliberations we hope to send out a message of encouragement to the great human family who with us believes the path of violence means race suicide and the downfall of civilisation."

## *Chapter XIII*

### PRISONERS AND CAPTIVES

**I**T is impossible with any exactness to say what happened in past centuries. The Middle Ages have reports of torture and cruelty which are terrifying. But it is uncertain how common were the worst cruelties and how exaggerated the stories. I am very doubtful if the fires of downright hatred and intolerance ever burnt more fiercely than they do to-day. Physical suffering from torture and similar cruelty has been revived and mental anguish probably much worse than ever. Year after year in prison with no prospect of any release or even charge is in itself a torture. All prisons are bad, but some are far worse than others. I have sat terrified and horrified listening to men and women, quite as sincere in their outlook on life as I am, explaining and defending treatment of political and religious opponents, which ought to bring shame and disgrace to any man.

I have been brought right up against this condition of things when investigating what Governments have done in South Africa and India, but I have never felt so much the evil effects of certain forms of propaganda which lead on to wholesale persecution and death as

during the past twenty years when journeying up and down the world. Men and women since the war seem to have lost all humanity when defending or supporting opinions and beliefs concerning forms of Government and economic relationships. I have brought together in this book many impressions of statesmen I have met, but behind these conversations there should be the knowledge that in prisons and camps there are at this moment tens of thousands of people whose only crime is that they have spoken their minds in the open and tried to persuade their fellows to join in changing the forms of government. Ignore, if you please, those against whom it can be proved that they tried to use force and violence. There are still tens of thousands whose only crime is free speech. Nor do those who have been driven to use force deserve the fate which their rivals who are successful impose upon them.

This is one of the very worst diseases of modern civilisation, and if it is not soon cleared away will spread to such an extent as to poison human relationships for generations to come. The Christianity—which is not true Christianity—as practised by huge organisations has a great deal to answer for in this. Other religions, in the Far East, or irreligion, in Russia, behave in the same way. But the worst fault is ours, European and American Christians. We had nearly a century of a more liberal and tolerant attitude towards life, at least in thought, if not always in practice. Nations considered civilised appear to have relapsed or to be relapsing into an attitude of mind of intolerance.

There is a smaller number of people in almost all



countries whose plight is specially worthy of consideration I mean the war resisters, or as we described them in 1914-18—conscientious objectors. In all countries where compulsory military service is the law of the land, such men suffer very considerably. Some nations are more humane in their treatment than others, but they all use every means in their power to call every young able bodied man into the armed forces. Sometimes after months of imprisonment my friends who organise war resistance are able to get a comrade released. In the main though, those who refuse war service must pay the penalty which the law lays down. Remember these men sacrifice their whole future in life because they are convinced on religious, moral, or political grounds that war will cease when the masses refuse to fight. Some of these men are imprisoned for many years, others for shorter periods. They all face ruin, for it is nearly impossible to earn their living after release. Some serve repeated terms of imprisonment, others are declared insane, according to notices received by their friends. The War Resisters' International has occasionally been able to prove the insanity consists only in the young man endeavouring to practise the creed he learnt from the Gospels. The movement has gained strength to such an extent that in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, and Finland, alternative service has been allowed. Even here there are some who refuse it and any other compromise. In France there is a steadily growing resistance to military service. It was recently publicly stated in the Senate that 120,000 men had avoided such service. The Government of Monsieur Leon Blum released a number of these prisoners

during its term of afflict. There is a strong Youth Movement led by Marcel Pichon which publishes a newspaper and other literature against violence and war. In Yugoslavia there is a very large religious sect known as the Nazarenes. They are willing to compromise with the Government up to the point of bearing arms, and thus they absolutely refuse to do. A few years ago the War Resisters' International were able to secure the release of one hundred and twelve of these men, but since then the numbers have increased considerably.

I have mentioned certain countries, but must emphasise that in all countries where compulsory military service is the law war resisters are put into prison often again and again until the period during which they should serve has ended.

There is also another sort of person who is almost a prisoner—the huge multitude of persons with no country or nationality, scattered throughout the world. The late Dr. Nansen, Viscount Cecil, and others have rendered great service to these unfortunate people through the Nansen Committee and organisation set up by the League of Nations. There is now a movement to bring the office and Committee, which have been shelved, into active work again. Every Government should put some money aside for this purpose. These stateless people have no country to call their own, many thousands are refugees who dare not go back, even if they could, to what was once their native land. They have escaped across frontiers from political enemies and now find themselves helpless and stranded. Others, because of the insanity which divided Europe into small states without thinking of the problems created for individuals, and which out of alien

people have made Germans, Poles, Austrians, and Czechs without any real provision enabling them easily to prove their nationality. Some efforts have been made to deal with these difficulties, but thousands remain unable to find a resting-place where they can feel themselves securely at home.

These questions concerning prisoners and exiles have been raised by me in every country visited. In this book I would like to appeal for much more publicity on all these questions. Most of all I would appeal for much more toleration. If the hate fires can be dampened down, if conscience can be recognised as something too sacred to be persecuted, and if we can make up our minds to bear each other's burdens, it will be easier to solve difficulties which look insoluble now. Meantime help is needed. We ought to bring pressure, wherever we are able to secure the release of those in prison for political offences and for their conscience's sake.

I think the Society of Friends and all other organisations of similar opinion on this, and there are very many, might come together and form an international committee for the purpose of assisting political prisoners and their dependants wherever they are found. Except in the extreme case we are witnessing in Germany, the days of direct persecution for religious opinions and practices seem to be dying out. In their place there is the terrible persecution and death waged between people with differing views on economic and political questions. Surely it is not too much to hope that very soon a better spirit of mutual forbearance and toleration will appear and enable all of us to live free from such terror.

## APPENDIX

*An Address delivered by the Right Hon George Lansbury,  
M.P., on December 17th, 1937, to the Kulturbund,  
Vienna*

I COME to you as a Pacifist Socialist, a member of the British House of Commons elected to oppose violence and war of every kind, and to work for the establishment of peace and security through international co-operation between all peoples

We pacifists possess no more courage, no more virtue than other people, neither are we cowards—as many prisons in the world testify at this moment. We make no claim to be able to cure the ills of the world by the use of smooth words, excusing evil, or by any means other than those associated with the two words, "common sense." Religion is applied common sense. When Jesus bid men and women to pray to be forgiven their sins, and to forgive others as they hoped to be forgiven, to love their enemies and to do to others as they would be done unto, he was not talking sentimental nonsense, but telling people in a simple, realist manner that all of us need forgiveness because all of us, individuals and nations, have sinned against the light, and are continually doing so. And of this there will be no end until we are willing to accept the simple truth that we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God.

May I, at this point, make it quite clear that I am not speaking on behalf of any political or trade unionist organisation, I am speaking on behalf of the world pacifist movement comprising Christian pacifist Churchmen, members of the Society of Friends, and men and women pacifists who belong to no religious denomination. The active group is known as Embassies of Reconciliation.

We are strengthened in our faith because our own life's experience and the history of the world has demonstrated the final and complete futility of war. This is a fact that I would respectfully drive home to all who listen to me or may later read what I say. Twenty three years have passed since August, 1914, nineteen years since Armistice Day of 1918, and now Europe is once again an armed camp and the civilised world from Pole to Pole is again preparing for mass suicide.

Every statesman to whom I have spoken asserts that his country is arming for defence. Every statesman of any authority in every land declares that another great war will result in the destruction of civilisation and in chaos. During the last war the youth of the world was enlisted to save democracy and destroy militarism, neither objective was accomplished. The war which the world is now preparing for must take as its slogan—"Join up and fight to make the world safe for barbarism". War cannot be destroyed by war. We shall kill the war spirit when we substitute co-operation for competition and are willing to be partners in a world commonwealth within which peoples will live at peace, because collective justice has taken the place of violence and war.

Make no mistake these warnings about barbarism are not made by pacifists alone. We agree with those who make them, all of whom are men holding leading positions in all the Governments of the world. These men tell the world that another great war will result in neither victors nor defeated; that all will face ruin. The infliction of fearful agony on the peoples of Spain and China is con-

deinned by everybody. The awful suffering and slaughter are a blasphemy against God and humanity. There are many pacifists who would willingly sacrifice their lives if by so doing these frightful happenings could be stopped, but we all know that neither pacifists nor those opposed to them can settle those wars by an extension of the fighting. And no Government is as yet sufficiently free of self interest to act alone the part of peacemaker.

The world situation is seen on a small scale in these lands, and I appeal to any who disagree with me to think for a moment what is going on in other countries described as civilised. Everywhere towns are being blacked out at night for the purpose of trying out defensive measures against air attack, gas masks by the million are being manufactured, to be worn by new-born babies, aged and sick persons, and whole populations in all lands. This means that all those nations who condemn bombing in Africa, Spain, and China, and all who denounce the slaughter of women and children, and men, are themselves preparing to use the same hell begotten, devastating methods whenever another war breaks out. Defences against aerial warfare, we are told by some authorities, are being perfected. Governments know, however, quite certainly that "bombers" will get through. If this were not so, these same Governments would not be manufacturing millions of gas masks and organising schemes for the removal of whole populations from what are described as danger zones.

I confess to a feeling almost of despair as I write these words. But somehow the conviction strengthens and deepens within me that the peoples of the world will rise up in their millions and refuse to allow themselves to be destroyed in this barbarous manner. Thousands of women in all countries are now refusing to bear children, they will not go through the trouble of child birth knowing the horrible future which Governments are planning for these children. They will not accept the hideous dilemma,

"choke or be choked", which is what aerial bombing has brought to us. No, women understand the meaning of international and national affairs more clearly than ever before. But in spite of all the propaganda and the devilish efforts made in a few quarters to keep the hate fires burning, most people desire peace with those called enemies, rather than war.

We must not allow our minds to be swamped by a recital of the horrors of war, although it is of supreme importance that we should keep in mind the fact that all beneficial advance in scientific and inventive knowledge may be lost if once the world's devilish machinery for slaughter is set in motion.

We are living in a world which in many ways appears more marvellous than in any previous period in the history of man. I met Senator Marconi during my visit to Rome. Although he was terribly depressed when speaking of the danger of war, he was cheerful and confident that ultimately mankind would use the great inventions which men like Edison, himself, and many others had given to the world, not for destruction, but for the purpose of bringing peace, happiness, and goodwill to the nations of the world.

I cannot think otherwise. Men and women are as brave and courageous, as adventurous and unselfish in the pursuit of knowledge and power which will benefit mankind as others are in the desperate gamble of war. It is really nonsensical to talk as if our children must be trained to fight if we are to retain the great virtues of chivalry and disinterested sacrifice for great ideals. In the past ordinary seamen, without knowledge of whither they were sailing, found their way across the great water spaces and opened up the seven seas, for the service, not of a nation, but for the whole human race. These adventurers came from many lands. In the same manner brilliant men and women of all races are to-day conquering the air. Who is there who does not feel a thrill of down

right pride and admiration for those who, braving all danger, are able to demonstrate that mountain ranges and ocean barriers will very soon no longer be obstacles to free intercourse between nations?

May I mention Marconi again? When speaking of aviation he said "What a terrible crime it will be if this magnificent invention should be used to destroy the very civilisation which produced it" It is sheer madness for any of us to accept as inevitable this terrible suggestion that aviation must become the destroyer of the human race. No, we must unite and say that such a crime shall not be.

We all pay our meed of praise and congratulations to the Russian pioneers who crossed the top of the world, flying over deserts of ice in order to find a shorter and easier method of reaching the American Continent. We also admire the young Japanese pilots who flew here from Japan and home again almost without being heard of, and what can any of us say of Miss Jean Batten who has demonstrated that sex is no barrier where courage, nerve, and determination are needed? It is the height and depth of unreason to teach our children that war is needed to keep us fit and strong. There is more and still more to be learned about our world which at present is hidden from us simply because we do not think it worth while to pay as much attention to the work of scientific research for the benefit of mankind as we do in searching for the means to destroy each other.

Courage and endurance, strength and fortitude, are more easily developed voluntarily in the service of invention and scientific, surgical, and medical research. We have our heroes and heroines in every department of human life, who leave behind them imperishable memories of great service, great endurance, and service to humanity, in marvellous endeavours to show how we can combat disease. Many of these sacrificed leisure, comfort, and



life itself, not on the battlefields of death but on the battlefield that gives life

So let us dismiss as a foolish dream the fantastic notion that war must continue in order to preserve courage and initiative. There will always remain with us opportunities for an ever increasing exhibition of courage and endurance in civilian life. And as in aviation, we must insist, as soon as we are able to make our voices heard, that this wonderful means of transport shall come under international control and be organised for peaceful purposes entirely. And with this there must be the provision, through international effort, of fuelling stations and landing fields open to the nationals of all countries.

When you are told that it is not possible to organise aviation as an international service, think of the international co-operation which exists in connection with posts and telegraphs, wireless on land and on sea, lightships and lighthouses, buoys around rocky shores and coasts, all supplied to guide on their voyages the mariners of all nations. Governments also organise for the preservation of health, for the stamping out of crime. Instead of forcing opium on the people of China, Governments now co-operate to put down the sale and use of poisonous drugs. Most nations are members of the International Labour Office, which may be regarded as the Labour Department of the League of Nations. No trade unionist or Socialist leader desires this office to be closed down, neither do many, if any, employers. Tories and Socialists, Communists and Fascists, employers and workers, and government representatives from all lands, meet together and in a friendly manner discuss how to bridge the gap which divides one producing country from another. Progress is being made. We are discovering that it is possible, when people think in the spirit of co-operation and mutual service, to overcome the economic difficulties connected with the very different standards of wages and conditions which exist throughout all the competing nations of the world.

This International Labour Office is the one outstanding achievement of Geneva. I am confident that if the world conference which my friends and I are demanding is soon held, the vast knowledge of economic conditions in all countries which this organisation has collected will help to make possible a start in creating an economic United States of Europe. I do not say the I.L.O. could do all that is needed, but the great organisation which exists to bring sanity, goodwill, and order into international labour relationships will be able to assist very materially in the bigger task of enabling nations freely to exchange their goods and commodities one with another.

My main point, however, in these remarks concerning new conditions, is to emphasise the fact that this generation is rapidly conquering space, has overcome all difficulties of direct communication between nations—by the spoken word across the air—and is able to do so even in the midst of what is said to be widespread hatred between nations. The nations of the world are now at this moment co-operating for mutual service. The principle and practice are established. Our task is to extend what is now being practised so that all the economic and territorial difficulties which confront us can be peaceably settled.

And in addition to what I have said of co-operation, organised and supported by Governments, there are also the vast international monopolies and other corporations which control finance, industry, and trade. The world financiers and capitalists do not allow differences of race or creed, religion or politics, to divide them. They buy or produce cheap in order to sell at a profit, whether they trade in coco-nuts, timber, coal, or gold. From the point of view of our present state of morals, there is nothing wrong about this, because all nations at present agree that business can only exist on a profit making basis, and consequently this policy is accepted by all countries which live by and approve of the policy of commercial competition. This principle of competition is, however,

not now working in some of the principal areas of finance, industry, and commerce. Some most important Governments to a very large extent now control through common action in co-operation the currency of their respective nationals. This is also true of some small nations. Huge international corporations, within which nations who are said to be getting ready for war are strongly represented, organise huge monopolies which control the output and sale of many commodities, including rubber, iron and steel, tea, sugar, and wheat. Not one of these concerns could operate effectively without the sanction and some times active assistance of the rest. Nearly all submit to a form of supervision and to some control, and consequently, when we are told that the present moment is not a propitious one, our reply is that we are asking, not for something new, but for an extension of what is now being done by private enterprise with government aid, we demand that this should be extended in order to ensure that the competitive struggle between nations shall be ended through the co-operative sharing of the world's resources and markets by means of an international organisation created and responsible to a reformed League of Nations.

In pursuit of my quest for peace I have appealed to every leading statesman in the world to give up the wearisome, tiresome business of talking at each other across the air or through the medium of the Press, and instead to come together and talk with each other. In effect, I have asked for a peace conference now—without any further loss of time. The British Government, as I write, has announced its willingness to discuss in a preliminary manner, through Lord Halifax and Lord Perth, how best Great Britain, Germany, and Italy may be brought together as friends instead of remaining as potential enemies. All pacifists welcome peace talks. We need, however, a much wider discussion of world affairs than is now taking place.

The situation all nations have to meet can only begin to be adjusted by Germany, Italy, and Britain engaging in friendly discussions—a wider, all-embracing conference must be held. By all means let us help any one, two, or three peoples to find a way to peace, we must, however, understand that peace to be lasting must be universal and cover the whole world.

I do not claim that what I shall propose is anything like a short cut to a millennium or, as one of our British writers has said, "a pill to cure an earthquake." I do claim that unless the world accepts an entirely new conception of human relationships, this present civilisation will perish in self-destruction.

What then shall we do to save ourselves from the calamity which all statesmen say threatens us? The simple straightforward way is for the masses in all countries to make their voices heard in such a manner as will compel each government to adopt a complete change of policy and accept as the foundation of their relationships with other nations the basic principle of Christ's teaching—that all mankind is one family and that in their world there is room enough and co-operative power enough to enable all the children of men to enjoy the good gifts nature has given us, and the enormous scientific and other results of invention that the world now possesses. It is impossible for any of us to live in isolation, although it is equally true that we shall not for many centuries to come, if ever, be able to live under one rule. But it is possible to organise international relationships in such a way as will ensure, through co-operative sharing of territories, natural resources and markets, the peaceful solution of the present economic plight of the world.

When Mr. Wilson published his famous Fourteen Points as the basis on which peace should be established at the end of the Great War, he dealt with the question of colonies in Point 5, which was as follows

"A free, open minded and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon strict observation of the principle that, in determining all such questions of sovereignty, the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the Government whose title is to be determined"

In a letter to the London *Times* on October 31st, the late Canon Sheppard, Lord Ponsonby, and myself urged the British public to consider Mr Wilson's proposal. We said

"The application of these principles in the present critical situation involves

- (a) The abandonment of the weapons of economic war, in the shape of tariffs, quotas, and currency restrictions
- (b) The abandonment of the private ownership of colonial possessions in favour of the extension of a revised mandate system to all non self governing territories, and the establishment of an international colonial service through a league of nations as the instrument of the new experiment in international co operation

Our experience supports the view that the people of this country are now ready to endorse such measures to secure peace, and we ourselves are convinced that there is no other way.

This is a summary of the proposals for dealing with the question of colonies which I have discussed with many statesmen at home and abroad. It is the only logical method by which the difficulties which now exist can be equitably solved. I am not suggesting that any Government is at the moment willing to accept such a solution. It is, however, certain that in Great Britain and in other

countries, there is a growing volume of opinion that if we are to give all nations an equal opportunity to share non-self-governing territories in order to ensure such freedom of trade as would secure access to raw materials and freedom of settlement (where this is possible without interference with the rights of the native population) such a scheme must be put into operation.

We have reached a stage when the prestige attaching to ownership of overseas possessions must give place to an international control which will safeguard the rights and interests of all. This question of empire is one which must be dealt with in an entirely new spirit. We are learning how impossible it is to determine from outside how a people will allow themselves to be ruled. Britain learned that lesson after the South African War and again after the collapse of the efforts made by her Government, in company with the Governments of America and France, to smash the Russian Soviet Government. The Japanese will not rule for very long in China, neither can Italy, Germany, Britain, or any other country ever hope to control directly or indirectly the people of Spain.

The days of imperialism as we have understood it are numbered. Very wisely the British people have changed their relationships with the self-governing portions of the world which were once under the control of the Government in London. The British self-governing Dominions are now a Commonwealth of absolutely free, self-governing nations, bound together with a bond best described as one of affection and mutual interests. India is on the road to attaining a similar position. No one who knows the facts will dispute me when I say that there is no power in the world which can possibly prevent the people of India gaining the same right of self-determination as is possessed by the Irish Free State and all self-governing members of the British Commonwealth of Nations. The people of Britain are proud of their past. They are, however, rapidly learning the truth that empires always

decay and that their Empire will pass completely from them unless in some way it can be transformed into a perfectly free Commonwealth of nations who, of their own free will, associate together for their mutual benefit. If France, Britain, and all powers exercising control over others will take this course, the world will soon be at peace.

I call attention to these facts concerning my own people, not from any feeling of self-righteousness, but in order to demonstrate the fact that nations as dissimilar as those at present within the British Commonwealth are able thus to associate as equals without being forced into association for any other reason than that they agree that union is the best means of securing their well-being.

May I at this point turn to Europe. I am speaking in a city best known as the capital of a great Empire which held under its sway peoples of various races and creeds, all of whom still live in the same territories, though some of them are divided and ruled by other Governments. Before the war there was a very considerable measure of economic unity between the nations forming the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The peace imposed on the defeated at the close of the Great War left this part of Europe divided both as political and economic units. I daily receive at my home in London magazines, newspapers, and visitors from most countries in South Eastern and Middle Europe. These magazines and newspapers come from people who are said to have benefited through the operation of the peace treaties, and from those who consider themselves aggrieved. One thing appears certain everywhere there is some discontent. And from the territories under Turkish rule right across to the Baltic many of the smaller States find themselves hampered in their efforts to develop their economic life and trade with other nations, which they must do if they are to develop and improve the standard of life of their people.

The late Monsieur Briand, when Minister of State in

France, advocated a United States of Europe, not tied together as a political unity, but as producers and traders whose best interests would be served through co operating with each other for the purpose of raising the standard of life of all

I am not proposing that either Germany, France, Britain, or Italy should be given or exert any power over other nations. It is, however, true that if these nations would unite to give a lead to all the large and small states between the Baltic and the Black Sea, they would be sure of a response. Who will deny the fact that while there is much talk of colonial development in Africa and elsewhere, and the need for providing means for emigrating millions of people, Europe itself is not at all properly developed? No part of Europe or Great Britain is as yet used up or worked out in an economic sense. It is right for people to travel and found new homes and nations outside their own borders. There is, however, some truth in the saying "The fool has his eyes on the ends of the earth." While we think of natural resources in Africa and elsewhere waiting development, let us be quite sure we are using all that is within reach at our own doors.

I plead with the nations of this continent to turn their minds away from the idea of security gained through the use of armaments and alliances to defend themselves and to make a new start, clearing their minds of all idea of war. There is, we are told by some authorities, a vast potential natural wealth, from the Balkans to the Baltic, waiting for full development. We know that there are many resources for various reasons not being fully utilised. Millions of men, able and willing to work these resources, could, with the aid of science, create for the use of themselves and others all they now lack in material means for a full life. Surely Europe, which at present is divided into groups spending all their energies and knowledge in preparing for destruction, can, even at this eleventh hour, be brought to see the common sense in the proposal that



while leaving each nation free to organise its own national life in its own way, all could, nevertheless, co-operate to exchange with each other the goods and services they are best able to produce

This may appear very simple and too easy, but is it not more simple and easy to understand when written down than are the schemes for mutual destruction at present being prepared? Given the will, naval, military, and aviation experts could very easily and quickly formulate plans of campaign ready to be used should war come. Why is it not as reasonable to assume that, given goodwill, the same kind of discussion, the same organising power, could be turned away from war and instead be used for preparing schemes by which nations would carry on trade and intercourse along the only worth while way—that is, each nation exchanging with others what it can most easily and readily produce?

If this proposition is to be successful, nations and Governments must change their attitude towards each other. We must accept the fact that no one nation or group of nations will ever be able to remain prosperous while others remain stricken with poverty and disease, the result of poverty.

My correspondence and interviews prove this because, in spite of many very serious complaints concerning language and cultural rights of minorities, there also comes an over riding demand that something should be done to improve the economic plight of Europe through the establishment of such trading relationships between all the peoples of the Continent as will enable them to develop the resources of their own lands, and exchange these with manufactured or other goods they require from other countries.

There is truth in the saying that though evil may seem to prosper for a time, there is a Nemesis in the world which in the end destroys it. But I am here pleading for a peace of understanding based on goodwill and co-operation. Governments win the support of their people in war by

declaring that the war they are undertaking is forced upon them and necessary for the defence of their interests and territory. There is, however, a growing intelligence among the masses of all classes which is enabling them to realise that once ordinary people refuse to consider as their enemies people whose language, religion, and culture are different from their own, we shall soon secure peace. This is also true of national government. There is no reason in the assumption that because I am a Socialist I should want to kill a Tory or a Fascist. It is my right and my duty to do my utmost by reason and argument to counter the opinions of those who disagree with me, and for them to have the same rights. We do not convert people to our point of view by persecution, imprisonment or slaughter. Murder is murder whenever murder takes place, no matter what excuse the murderer may make. It is possible for us to kill one another but impossible to destroy truth for truth is eternal.

I have no intention of discussing any particular form of government. My own political home is in Socialism, a Socialism established by consent and not by bloody revolution or violence. Neither Fascism, Socialism, Communism, or any other form of government will last if based on force, all history teaches this truth. Theories change, but experience gained through the centuries contains unanswerable truths. How can we boast of progress if we continue to try and defend greed and selfishness, and imperialist nationalism, with the use of the most diabolical methods of destruction? Some form of government always arises out of disorder, but true government of the people, by the people, for the people, can only be permanently established by goodwill, co-operation, and peaceful means. Nowhere in the world has force proved itself capable of giving prosperity and peace to any nation.

All peoples, within their own borders, must be free to live their own lives in their own way. In the United States of America people belonging to nearly every race

in the world live side by side with a minimum of disorder and discontent, except the discontent which prevails in all countries where life is organised for private profit and not for social service. It does not at present seem possible for Europe immediately to redistribute territories and move frontiers. It is, however, possible for Britain, France, Russia, Germany, and Italy to unite in a great crusade with all other peoples to establish an economic unity throughout the whole European Continent.

Both inside and outside our own nations we must accept as a law of our being that all must rise together or ultimately face ruin together. This new world cannot hold together as competitive units. We must co-operate with each other in order to ensure mankind as a whole shall benefit and enjoy all the abundant blessings which

and relationships between one class and another But there is no reason why Nazis should refuse to live in peace side by side with the Communists, willing to learn from each other what are the actual questions which divide and throw them into opposing camps I can never understand why I should hate and want to kill somebody whose views I disagree with In my country my forefathers hanged people for sheep-stealing and other petty offences We used to burn those known as witches Our forefathers persecuted one another because of what were described as religious beliefs To-day we, and people in all lands, are wiser about these questions, but on social and political issues we are intensely divided Is there any more reason to imagine these questions can be solved by persecution and violence than there is to believe questions of religious belief can be settled by force? Experience gives the only answer, which is, No only reason and toleration can give peace

So far my talk has been on a variety of subjects which have occupied my thoughts when going round the world advocating peace May I now, in bringing this paper to a conclusion, again say that we are living in an entirely new world of opportunity Within a few years the powers which men possess for world development have expanded at a very great rate The old saying "You cannot put new wine into old bottles" is a very simple truth, and very applicable to our present day requirements It is not now possible for any of us to live in isolation Pure and simple individualism must now find its fulfilment in association with those among whom we live Communal service will alone enable us to give into the common pool of helpfulness what is needed to assist in the development of that form of life expressed in the words, "each for all and all for each" This old Cornish motto is possible of realisation in every land, because everywhere with goodwill, the knowledge we now possess, if used co-operatively, will enable us to live as brothers and sisters The form of

government and administration once this is understood will be very simple and understandable, and will be based on a true fraternity, because each one will for the first time be doing his utmost for the good of all, confident that in doing so he, too, will share in the fuller and nobler life which will follow such a change.

If Jesus Christ came through that door with Julius Cæsar and Napoleon beside him, to whom would you kneel? You know, as I do, that we should kneel to Jesus Christ. And so I appeal that we make up our minds to-night to reject violence and accept the way of love, and become citizens of the kingdom of Heaven.